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Urban Renewal in the Traditional Center of a Mega City A Case Study of Shankhari Bazar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Declaration

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- 5) I confirm that I acknowledge the doctoral regulations of the Faculty of the Environmental Sciences of the Technische Universität Dresden.

Sudipti Biswas

December 2017, Dhaka

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Disclaimer

All the information in this dissertation collected from interviewees are believed to be true and presented in good faith. All the images and photographs presented are either taken by the author, or taken from literature, or taken from publicly open repositories, or those that are published in the public domain, or presented with due credit and permission from the photographer. All the old images presented here are beyond the copyright protection as they were published more than 70 years ago and now published in the public domain.

Summary

Inner city urban blight is a prevalent area of research in particularly in the industrialized Northern cities. There are also significant scientific discussions on characterizing inner city urban blight, which is usually associated with unemployment, poverty, depopulation and social exclusion, and empirical work to address this problem. But compared to the Northern cities, similar research in the Global South shows a low profile, and even much lower in the South Asian region that accommodates a substantial number of mega cities.

City cores are the most densely populated area and very important business and industrial zone in case of South and also South East Asian cities, unlike North American or European inner cities. These City cores could be generally characterized with poor housing condition, buildings of heritage value, inadequate and poor quality of urban services, deteriorating physical environment and sometimes also social problems. Thus, urban renewal in this context requires a review of traditional approaches.

This research concentrates on urban renewal to address urban blight in the historical city core of Dhaka, a South Asian megacity. This is a qualitative and exploratory research using a single case study in detail, which is a small street called Shankhari Bazar in old Dhaka. beside the literature, information is collected through semi structured interviews, group discussion and workshops with different stakeholders, participant observation and relevant legal documents.

This research aims at improving the living condition of the traditional city center in the megacity of Dhaka, which is considered as a blighted area in the planning documents and also perceived as well as recognized to be blighted largely in the professional and academic field. To do that, it has taken the course of investigating a number of issues. Such as, understanding the urban blight features in Dhaka, driving forces that foster urban blight to set in neighborhoods, relevant examples of urban renewal in South and South-East Asian cities, hurdles that check improvement of blight situation, role of different actors in different perspectives such as fostering, addressing and fighting urban blight as well as their role, capacity and willingness in improving the situation.

The results identify the intricate complexity of the local socio-cultural-political-administrative setup and indicates the difficulty of large scale intervention. Instead, the study identifies the scopes where interventions are required and possible to achieve meaningful improvement with minimal mediations. Although the research focuses on the inner city of Dhaka but it also considers the wider regional scale and includes similar conditions in a few historical cities in South Asia. Consequently, the results of this study are also relevant for the regional scale to varying extent if not exactly.

List of abbreviation

Area-based community development	ABCD
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh	ASB
Annual Development Plan	ADP
Australian Agency for International Development	AUSAID
Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	BBS
Building Resources Across Communities	BRAC
Bombay Municipal Corporation	BMC
Bhaktaput Development Project	BDP
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology	BUET
Bombay Building Repairs and Reconstruction Board	BBRRB
Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation	BSCIC
Bangladesh Industrial and Technical Assistance Center	BITAC
Bangladesh Institute of Planners	BIP
Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon	BAPA
Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association	BELA
Bangladesh Centre for Advance Studies	BCAS
Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association	BEIOA
Building Resources Across Communities	BRAC
Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board	BTTB
Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation	BIWTC
Central Business District	CBD
Centre for Policy Dialogue	CPD
Centre for Urban Studies	CUS
Canadian International Development Agency	CIDA
Department of Archeology	DoA
Department of Environment	DoE
Delhi Development Authority	DDA
Design Consultants Limited	DDC
Detailed Area Plan	DAP
Detail Planning Zone	DPZ
Dhaka City Corporation	DCC
Dhaka North City Corporation	DNCC
Dhaka South City Corporation	DSCC
Dhaka Metropolitan Area	DMA
Dhaka Metropolitan Police	DMP
Dhaka Improvement Trust	DIT
Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan	DMDP
Dhaka University	DU
Dushtha Shasthya Kendra	DSK
(Dhaka) Water Supply & Sewerage Authority	(D)WASA
Defense Officers Housing Scheme	DOHS
Dhaka Electric Supply Authority	DESA
Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited	DESCO
Dhaka Power Distribution Company	DPDC

European Union	EU
Engineering Planning & Consultants	EPC
Federal Republic of Germany	FRG
Floor Area Ratio	FAR
Floor Space Index	FSI
Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry	FBCCI
General Economic Division	GED
Ganibangla Limited	GBL
Housing and Urban Development Corporation	HUDCO
Institute of Architects Bangladesh	IAB
Jahangirnagar University	JU
Khula University	KU
Lahore Development Authority	LDA
Member(s) of Parliament	MP
Master Plan for Delhi	MDP
Mymensingh Strategic Development Plan	MSDP
Ministry of Finance	MoF
Ministry of Planning	MoP
Ministry of Cultural Affairs	MoCA
Ministry of Housing and Public Works	MoHPW
Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce and Industry	MCCI
Non-governmental Organization	NGO
Orangi Pilot Project	OPP
OPP Research and Training Institute	OPP-RTI
OPP Orangi Charitable Trust	OPP-OCT
OPP Karachi Health and Social Development Association	OPP-KHASDA
Pakistan Environmental Planning and	PEPAC
Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper	PRSP
Participatory rural appraisal	PRA
Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha	RAJUK
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	SIDA
Small and Medium Enterprises	SME
Structure Plan	SP
Transferable Development Right	TDR
Transparency International, Bangladesh	TIB

Urban Area Plan	UAP
Urban Development Directorate	UDD
Urban Study Group	USG
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
United Nations Development Program	UNDP
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO

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1 Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research topic

Inner city urban blight, also perceived in other words such as decline or decay, is a prevalent area of research in particularly in the industrialized cities of West Europe and North America. Likewise, the area of inner city urban renewal, the broad subject is also covered under other names such as urban regeneration or revitalization, is well researched in these postindustrial societies. There are significant scientific discussions on characterizing inner city urban blight, which is usually portrayed with unemployment, depopulation and social exclusion, and empirical work to address this problem (Couch et al., 2011; Carmon, 1999; Müller et al., 2005).

Compared to the volume of inner city research, and theoretical research in the urban domain, as well, in the Northern cities, similar research in the Global South shows a low profile (Roy, 2009a). Inner city research in the Southern cities are sometimes covered in the stream on urban informality research, which has a quite big volume. The conceptualization of urban informality had emerged in the Latin American context. However, the study in other world-regions show the spatiality of urban informality within the global South. Professor Roy has contributed significantly in this informality research as well as the spatiality and change in the theoretical perspective of urban research. The Latin American urban analysis follows the legacies of dependency theory (Roy, 2009b). While the South Asian research follows the traditions of postcolonial theory, particularly the South Asian variant of postcolonial analysis is the subaltern studies. Thus, contemporary studies of South Asian cities are concerned with how the subaltern subjects consent to and participate in urban redevelopment and urban inequality (Roy, 2005; Roy, 2003; Roy, 2009c).

Precisely in South Asian urban scholarship, the area of inner city urban blight as well as renewal is still open. It cannot be said that the inner city problems are not researched at all. On the contrary, inner city issues in some cases has been frequently researched, Delhi, Lahore and Dhaka for example. However, most of the researches could be identified as limited in the scope simply to describe the historical development of the area, illustrate the planning, governance and management approaches, unfold the present day inner city problems, depict the informal market dynamics in the inner city, portray the historical-social-cultural significance of the neighborhood and urge for conservation of historic built structures. Unfortunately, the limited number of available researches have rarely covered the issues of urban blight and renewal either in the city center or other parts of the wider city with just a few exceptions. Delhi and more precisely Shahjahanabad, the walled city of Delhi could be an example of the trend.

Shahjahanabad, as well as Delhi, is researched in the stream of inner city research, (Datta, 1983; Datta and Jha, 1983; Banerjee, 1975; Shrivastav, 1982; Nath, 1993; Dupont and Tingal, 1997; Sivam, 2003; Jain, 2004; Garella, 2006; Yamane et al., 2008; Dutta and Bandyopadhyay, 2012; Thaper, 1980). However, research that cover urban blight and renewal approaches are very few in number (Verma, 1993; Mehra, 1991).

With the extract of literature on various issues, it can be argued that South and South-East Asian context urban problems, including the inner city distress are different, in various ways, compared to those in the Global North. The unprecedented growth of southern cities of recent decades coupled with economic and political changes make it difficult for urban planners to cope with, and the urban development perspective is to provide quantity rather than quality (Verma, 1993). And thus, development of new areas has become typical for the planning agencies in the developing world. Generally, such planning agencies are elitist in terms of formation, perspective and operation (Mehra, 1991). Like the planning agencies, also other service providing act in the same way. Consequently, the inner cities are left neglected in a way that perpetuate the inner cities as deprived and place for the deprived population (Verma, 1993; Roy, 2009b; Roy, 2009c; Watson, 2009; Leonard, 1986; Tunas, 2008). The trend of out migration from inner city with increased social and economic status (Khatun, 2003), which is observed in most of the cities worldwide, simply aggravates the misery of the city center which is further accentuated by its lack of or non-participation in the decision making arena.

On this background, the research concentrates on urban renewal to address urban blight in the historical city core of Dhaka.

1.2 Problem statement and research questions

Dhaka shows similarity with other big cities in the South Asian region in many urban features. Particularly the historical city core, perhaps, resembles more than the newly developed part of the city. Most of the old cities in the subcontinent are presently divided into two parts, the old city and the new city. In most cases, if not all, the old part was built within a fortified wall. Much of the walls have disappeared, yet some old cities still have the city wall of varying extent surviving several centuries. Some cities that had or still have some of the historical fortification include Agra, Ahmedabad, Amravati, Amritsar, Delhi, Dholavira, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Lucknow, Mumbai, Raigad, Udaipur and Warangal in India, Balkh in Afghanistan as well as Hyderabad, Lahore, Multan and Peshawar in Pakistan. City wall appears to be a common feature of those ancient cities in the Indian subcontinent that came directly under or had some association with the Mughal rule. Unlikely, Dhaka never had any encircling city wall, instead the ancient city area was encircled by river and canal that created a natural

fortification which probably relieved the construction of a city wall. Except this notable deviation Dhaka's historical old center is not eccentric from other sub continental old cities, in particular of those with Mughal association.

Traditional city cores, particularly in South and South-East Asian context, can be characterized with poor housing and living conditions, inadequate urban services and deteriorating physical environment but are also rich in architectural and cultural heritage as well as thriving in business, although mostly informal in nature (Abrams et al., 1963; Datta, 1983; Datta and Jha, 1980; Qadeer, 1983; Leonard, 1986; Misra, 1988; Mehra, 1991; Verma, 1993; Amin, 1991; Amin, 1995; Yamane et al., 2008; Islam, 1996a; Lee, 1996; Thaper, 1980; Tunas, 2008). The city core problems in Dhaka are briefly elaborated here.

- **Urbanization and growth**

Dhaka is an ancient urban settlement. Existence of early urban settlements date from 7th century. The city of Dhaka, as it is known today, was within or a nearby settlement under the Hindu and Buddhist rule. This agro based urban settlement was made the capital of Bengal province under the Mughal rule in 1610 and Dhaka started to thrive. Despite being the provincial capital under the Mughals, the intensity and richness of urbanization and monumentality of architecture, which is a prominent feature of Mughal cities, appears to have a much lower profile if it is compared with other provincial capital cities such as Lahore, Multan, Agra, Ahmedabad and Awadh for example.

Urbanization and growth of the city core and, obviously, the entire city is closely linked with the political and economic situation. The present day marked area of city core was primarily built in the British colonial period alongside the precolonial urban area. Old cities of this subcontinent that were developed during the colonial period shows a common character of urbanization, a densely populated and poorly serviced old settle for the local people and a widely spread, spacious and designed settlement containing civil line¹ and occasionally military settlement at a certain distance from the old core; as observed clearly in the case of Delhi (Datta, 1983) or Lahore (Leonard, 1986). In case of Dhaka, this distinct pattern was further intensified in the 24 years of Pakistan regime (1947-1971) and the legacy continued after the independence in 1971.

¹ Civil Lines (archaically White Town) are the residential neighborhoods developed during the British rule mainly for its senior officers. These townships were built all over the Indian subcontinent and were allotted to civil officers in the respective countries. Often such townships also accomodated local elites to allied.

- **Urban poverty and quality of life**

Poverty is not an isolated aspect found only in the city center, poverty is spread all over the city. Yet, poverty in the city center can easily be distinguished. It is reflected in the residents' income pattern as well as in the physical appearance, which also indicates lack of investment from both public and private sectors. Old Dhaka houses large number of low income people who are involved in the small scale and informal business. Also it is the first and prime target of the rural migrants that are gradually absorbed in the informal economic sector. Quality of life in the old Dhaka as reflected in the standard of life, quality of nutrition, health and education, availability and quality of urban services, quality of physical and built environment etc. is miserable if compared to many other parts of the city. Even in many cases the quality of life in some old Dhaka neighborhoods, Hazaribagh for example, appears to be meager in respect of other poverty stricken areas.

- **Built environment and physical infrastructures**

Like many other old cities in the subcontinent developed in the precolonial and colonial time, old Dhaka is also built primarily on pedestrian scale for limited population. But the city core is presently consumed by people many more times that the city can support. The built environment has also transformed drastically. Single storied and low rise buildings with courtyards have disappeared and replaced by multistoried buildings with almost 100% plot coverage. The land parcel has been continuously reducing due to sharing among heirs on one hand; on the other hand, high-rise buildings have been built on the reduced parcels of land without any set back areas. There is hardly any open space left and building footprints take maximum plot coverage. It continues leaving the entire area highly congested. The pedestrian precinct has been transformed into motorized transportation without proper modification in the road network. Consequently, traffic congestion has become an invariable part of the life. Similarly, the city core has faced densification without coping the quantity and quality of urban services and infrastructure.

- **Specialized economic area**

Old city core of Dhaka, like many other sub-continental cities, is the main economic and commercial area of the entire city. The entire area is full of numerous industries and businesses with a very wide range of variety and size. Some production and business particularly belong to the old city are not found anywhere else in the city. This area could be regarded as the money generator in the manufacturing, repair and servicing, crafts and wholesale trade sectors for the city and in some particular cases for the whole country. However, major portion of the business are small scale and mostly informal in the way of operation and compliance to relevant regulatory

framework. The businesses are linked with one another which primarily spreads horizontally. Also, except only a few, the businesses are home based and employs family labor to the maximum capacity. As a result, the residential area is full of manufacturing and trading activities that very often pose high risk to the neighboring area, fire hazard for example. The environmental disaster of Hazaribagh area due to tannery industries and the Nimtoli tragedy that took 124 lives in 2010 worth mention in this regard. In addition to the risks, extensive economic activities also contribute to the congestion and extra load on the scarce urban services.

- **Urban informality**

Urban informality is traditionally perceived as manifested in the informal economic activities while the contemporary scholarship also accepts informality as a mode of urbanization. Old Dhaka offers the biggest informal job market in the city. An old research shows that 65% of the jobs are in the informal sector and concentrated in the old city. It is difficult to state that the situation has changed radically since. This informal job market is the prime target of the rural migrants and the first point of the process of being absorbed in the city life. Informality in the mode of urbanization could be understood in the process of physical development of the area. Development, particularly in the built environment, is carried out overpassing the regulatory framework and often informal arrangement with the framework which is an extra-legal affair that belongs to informality as suggested by Ananya Roy (Roy, 2009c).

- **Implication of elitist planning approach**

Physical planning was introduced in the sub-continental cities under royal patronage and the form of urban planning as we know today was introduced by the colonial administration. As mentioned earlier, urban planning was utilized as a tool by the colonial administration to subordinate the local population and reward those who allied. And the planning process was always produced in a top down manner and imposed on the population with minimum right or scope to raise their voice in the process. The colonial legacy has continued and the planning is still elitist in process as well as in application. Starting from the later periods of British Colonial reign the formal planning paid most attention towards planning new development for the urban elites neglecting the old part of the city. Besides planning for the elites, the entire planning process is also led by elitist approach where the local desire and voice are marginalized. This trend is evident as most of the efforts of the city planning agency, Dhaka Improvement Trust (DIT) and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK) afterwards, is spent in planning new developments in Dhaka; Dhanmondi, Uttara, Banani, Baridhara, Gulshan etc. for example, that are dedicated for the elite group whereas the old city remains outside the planning target. The current planning document also shows the same pattern of negligence to the old Dhaka and demonstrates the elitist planning process produced in

a top down manner lacking participation and specific consideration of the old Dhaka situation.

In this background, this research attempts to addresses urban renewal for the inner city of Dhaka. To address urban renewal, it becomes necessary to understand the urban blight situation in the first place. Therefore, this study seeks answers for three research questions, they are as follows.

1. Why and how urban blight takes place, considering the example of Shankhari Bazar, in Dhaka?
2. How urban blight is addressed, considering the example of Shankhari Bazar, in Dhaka?
3. What can be improved in addressing urban blight situation in Dhaka taking the example of Shankhari Bazar?

This research is expected to fill the research gap in the research field of urban renewal in Bangladesh. Although the study concentrates on the old Dhaka situation, but this pattern can be followed in other cities also. Old city core and a distant civil line developed in the British reign is a very common character in many cities of the country such as Mymensingh, Narayangang, Barishal etc. Thus, knowledge from this research can be utilized to the renewal of such cities also.

Considering the similarity of Dhaka with other South Asian cities, this research can also contribute to recognize the South Asian context for urban blight and renewal in the inner cities which significantly differs from other realities.

The knowledge acquired could be directly applied for urban renewal of old Dhaka. The Detailed Area Plan (DAP), under the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) 2016-2035 framework, is the current spatial planning document for Dhaka and it address that special program is required for the old city core. The Mymensingh Strategic Development Plan (MSDP) 2011-2031 which is being executed by the Urban Development Directorate (UDD) would be a very good field to apply the knowledge directly.

1.3 Organization of the thesis

This dissertation is composed of 7 chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the research topic. The second chapter describes the research design and method in detail. The third chapter is mainly the extract of literature review. This chapter briefly describes the literature on the urban blight situation and the approaches of urban renewal to fight the blight. This chapter also describes in brief the urban blight situation and its

driving forces as well as urban renewal and similar examples from South and South-East Asia. The fourth chapter seeks answer to the first research question, the urban blight situation in city core of Dhaka. The fifth chapter attempts to answer the second research question, describing how the blight situation is addressed by different actors. The sixth chapter looks for the scope of improvement of the blight and blight management situation, the answer to the third research question. Finally, the seventh chapter draws the conclusion and offers recommendation in light of the research findings. This organization is presented in the following diagram.

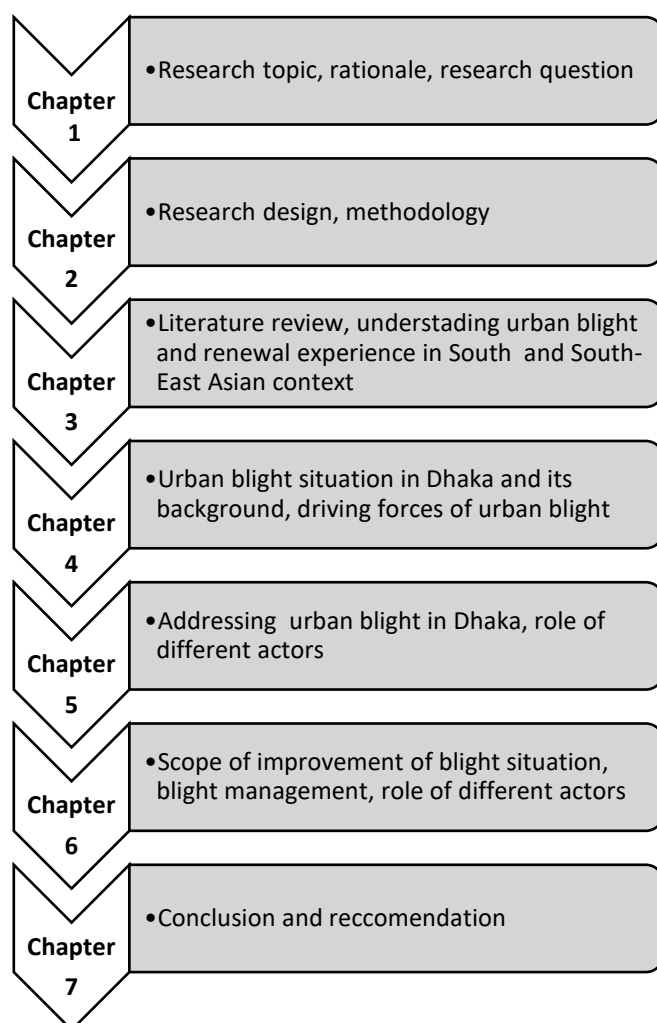


Figure 1: Organization of the thesis.

Source: Author.

2 Chapter 2: Research Design and Methods

This is a qualitative research and exploratory in nature. This research recognizes the limitation of scientific research background and complexity of inner city blight in the South Asian context. Thus, this research follows inductive reasoning and several theories to underpin the empirical investigation. This section describes the adopted research methodology.

2.1 Research design

The research design is developed following inductive reasoning and constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1997; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In this process, the study of the phenomenon it represents is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The researcher adapts the research process based on his learning from the data and understanding to peruse the data. The researcher learns more about the phenomenon involved, so does he about what sort of data should be sought (Berry et al., 2013). This process of constant comparative analysis of data implies that where whatever comes to the researcher's way is considered as data. Thus, the application is expanded beyond the field of qualitative research. This research is also, partially, shaped by the Strauss and Corbin's approach of grounded theory that describes a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to study a phenomenon and develops theory that is derived inductively (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 24).

Therefore, the strength of this research is derived from the research design. It has followed the conventional theoretical underpinning to support the empirical work on one hand. On the other hand, limited and partial application of grounded theory approach suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1997) exerts openness and flexibility to the research design. This openness and adaptability is considered the strength of the innovation in research designing.

Partial application of grounded theory approach in this research means that it has followed the approach suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1997) which describes grounded theory not as purely as a theoretical attitude, but more as a methodological process that addresses openness to adapt the research design along with the development of the research. And for this research, some adaptations are made to the original approach suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Restriction on pre-research literature review, which is suggested as ideal condition for grounded theory research, is not followed for this research. Although it started with collecting data from the detail study area, however this was supported with some theoretical basis in the beginning

and later on intensive literature review provided the necessary theoretical underpinning for the next phases of empirical work. The first phase of empirical work was conducted in 2011. Extensive literature review was also performed after preliminary analysis of the collected data that applied mainly coding and sampling. Afterwards, in-depth analysis of data, collected from the field and literature, followed constant comparative analysis process. The stages of coding, sampling, memoing and sorting were applied several times and in required orders, which means going back and forth again and again, to get a comprehensive set of standardized data that can be used as benchmark for next phases of analysis. Data analysis was done in a constant comparative manner and applying the qualitative content analysis as analysis instrument (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008), because this instrument is content sensitive (Klaus, 1980) and provides flexibility in the research design (Harwood and Garry, 2003). Based on the findings, details of the next phase of empirical work was framed. In 2012, second round of empirical work took place. A third round of small scale empirical work was done in 2014 which supported the research findings and did not generate significant new data and thus, it indicated the point of theoretical saturation. In 2016 and 2017 some of the physical features of the study area were checked and updated. However, in this phase again no significant change in the qualitative data was observed and thus, it indicated, again, the point of theoretical saturation.

The research questions include 'why', 'how' and 'what' and the research focuses on contemporary events, while at the same time it does not require control over behavioral events. According to Yin (1991), with such research characteristics, case study is the best fitted research strategy. Thus, a single case study is considered the city of Dhaka in the range of South Asian cities that fall under the scope of this research. For in-depth empirical work a single street, called Shankhari Bazar, in the traditional city center is selected.

2.2 Conceptual framework and addressing research questions

This research focuses on urban renewal of blighted inner city areas in the wider South Asian context. However, to do so it becomes necessary to understand the urban blight situation in the first place. Therefore, this research emphasizes to get clear understanding of both urban blight and urban renewal.

First it identifies several fields to understand the driving forces of urban blight in the city core in the South Asian context. Then these identified factors are checked in the particular case study of Shankhari Bazar and then used as reference for the city core and wider city of Dhaka. In the same way, for renewal programs and scope of intervention, examples from South Asian and neighboring countries are considered and

the applicability in the context of Shankhari Bazar as well as the wider city of Dhaka are checked. The total process is conceptualized in the following diagram.

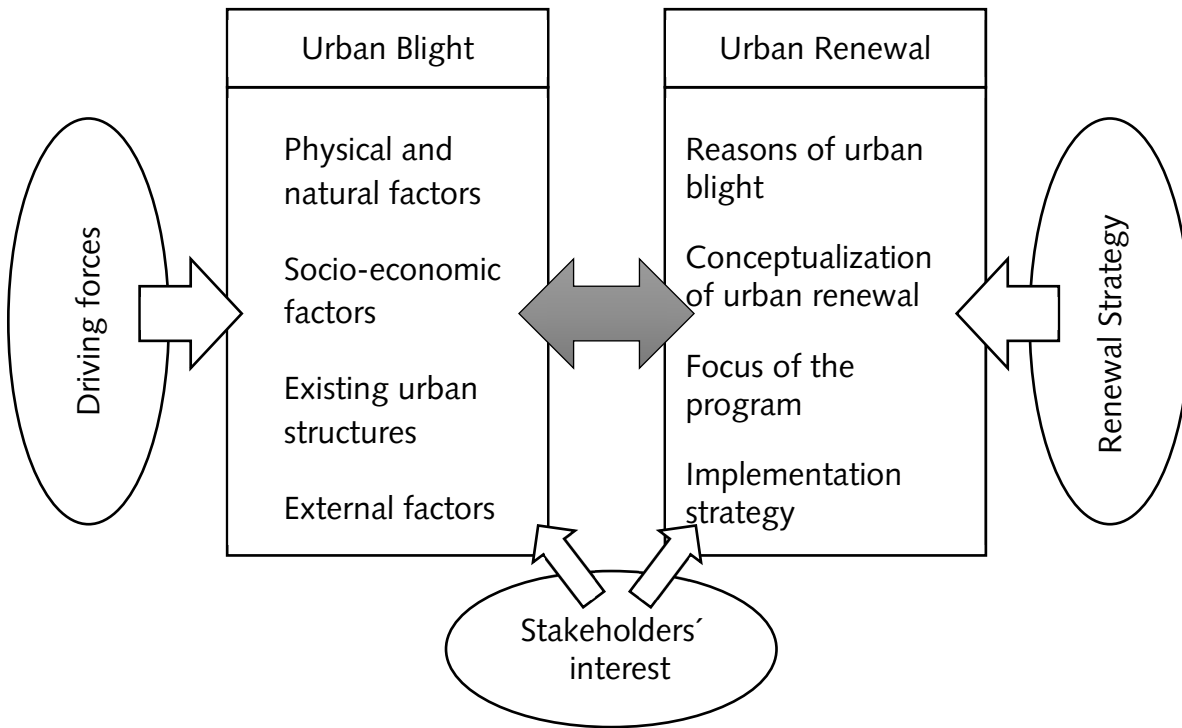


Figure 2: Conceptual research framework

Source: Author.

The study attempts to seek answers for three questions to get a comprehensive understanding of how to improve the living condition in the blighted inner city neighborhoods. The first question is expected to provide the background of urban blight in old Dhaka. This is done by checking the driving forces of urban blight, that are derived through literature review, in the particular case of Shankhari Bazar, old Dhaka and the wider city context of Dhaka.

Beside literature review, information is collected through formal and informal interviews with different actors. It depicts the expression of different factors of urban blight and also identifies the fields of urban blight and its deviation from the traditional inner city decline in the local context. The framework to address this research question is depicted in the following diagram.



Figure 3: Answering the 1sts Research Question

Source: Author.

The second research question recognizes how the current state of urban blight is addressed by different stakeholders. Role of different actors and their involvement in addressing the urban blight situation are identified with the help of information

collected through informal and formal interviews. Literature also provide necessary information. Beside describing the measures to address urban blight, justification of the actions by the respective actors are also explored in the answer. This section also throws some light on the policy environment and policy support for urban renewal. The process is presented in the following figure.

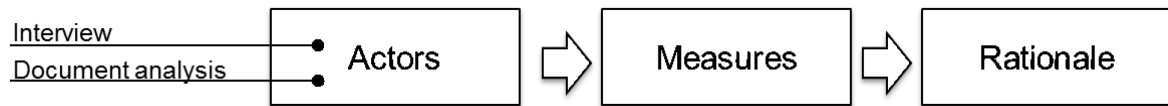


Figure 4: Answering the 2nd Research Question

Source: Author.

And finally, the last question is expected to identify recommendation for urban renewal, again with specific reference to Shankhari Bazar and Dhaka. Different measures are derived extracting literature and studying other examples. Some of the measures also evolve in the interviews with different actors. Applicability, relevance and acceptability of these measures are analyzed in the specific research area context. Barriers in the way of implementation of the discussed measures are also discussed. The approach can be illustrated as follows.

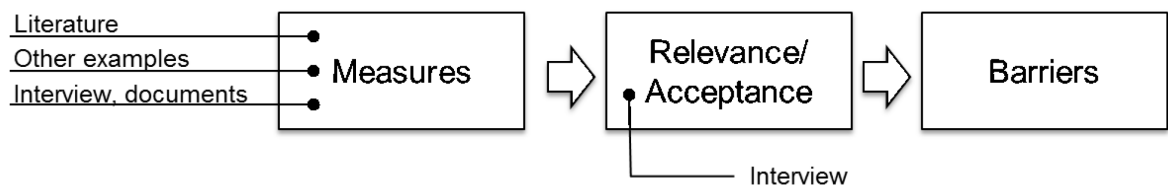


Figure 5: Answering the 3rd Research Question

Source: Author.

2.3 Delineating urban blight, urban renewal and the study area

Urban blight, in this research, is considered to be perceived in the manifestation of physical and spatial development. If physical and spatial development of a neighborhood is deteriorating, stagnant or take a slow pace then it is considered that the neighborhood has some association with urban blight. In addition, if a neighborhood or area is described or mentioned as blighted or decayed or distress or with a similar connotation then it is also considered as blighted.

Instead of detailing the status of the physical and spatial development of the concerned neighborhood, driving forces that foster urban blight to set are the focus in this research.

Urban renewal for this research follows the inherent ideology of the Bhaktaput Development Project (BDP) in Nepal. And thus, for this study, urban renewal is actions to improve the living condition of the residents of the concerned locality. Improvement of living condition is considered to address, at least, four broad categories of issues that

include livable built and physical environment, urban services, economic strength and socio-cultural environment.

In general, the study area includes the old Dhaka. Here old Dhaka is considered the area earmarked in the Detailed Planning Zone (DPZ) of Detail Area Plan (DAP), 2010. The area of DPZ 1 and DPZ 2 are considered as Old Dhaka, West and Old Dhaka, East which counts a total of 26 wards. After the division of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) into Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), the study area falls into the jurisdiction of DSCC. In the following figure, DPZ 1 and DPZ 2 containing 26 wards of old Dhaka are shown along with the other DPZs and wards in the entire city area.

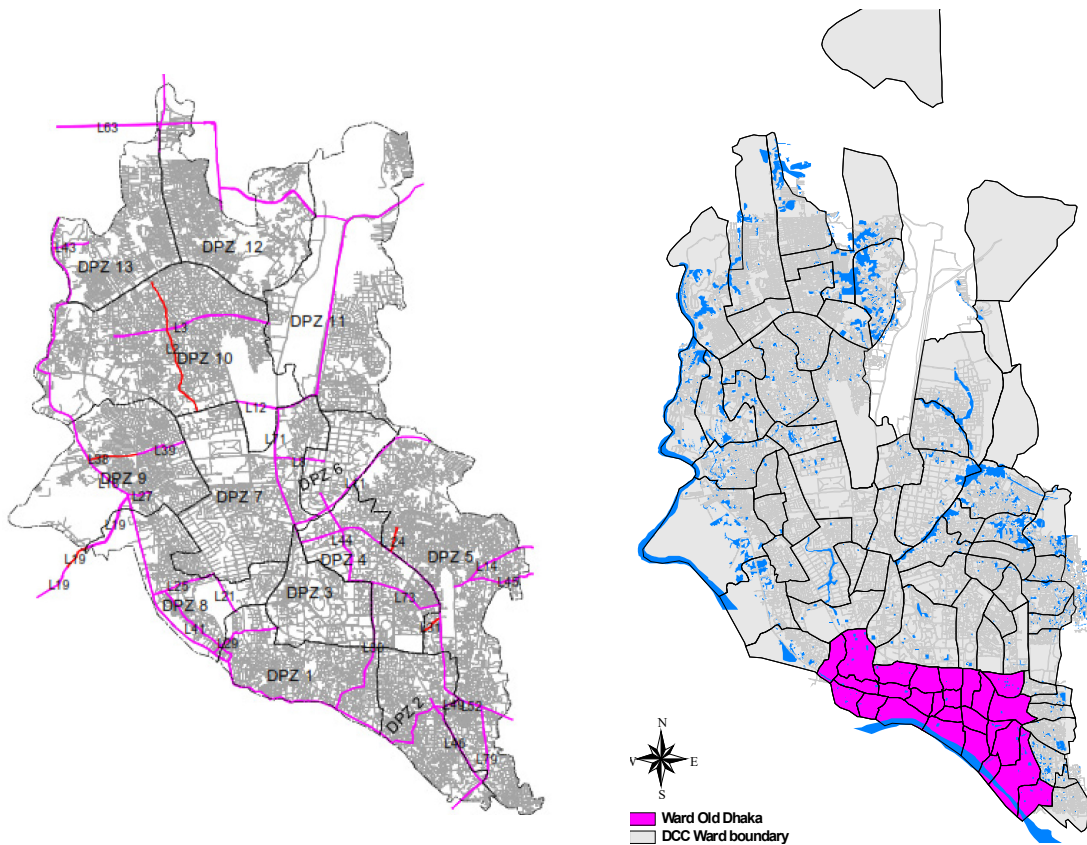


Figure 6: All the DPZ in the city of Dhaka, DPZ 1 and DPZ 2 make the old Dhaka (left) and colored area shows the 26 wards of old Dhaka along with the total 93 wards of Dhaka (right).

Source: (Left:) DAP Final Report for Group C, 2010, (right) Author.

For the intensive study, a small street is chosen in the city core. In the traditional city center of Dhaka several neighborhood streets are observed with walking along as well as some inhabitants are interviewed informally. Also relevant experts, such as urban scholars, professionals, activists etc., expressed their opinion about a street for detail study. Finally, a small street named Shankhari Bazar in the old Dhaka is selected as case study on the following considerations.

- One of the oldest urban settlements of the city
- Place of architectural interest
- Mixed use development with traditional shop-houses
- Traditional occupation/business
- Involvement of different interest groups

The street is about 350 m in length with 143 holdings. The area is approximately 0.018 km². Number of population is unavailable; a rough estimation is approximately 15000.



Figure 7: The detail study area, Shankhari Bazar road and adjacent narrow plots.

Source: Author, based on Haider (2005).

For details, not only the area of Shankhari Bazar is studied, adjacent areas such as Tantibazar, Pannitola, Jhonson Road etc. and other areas of the city core such as Gopibagh, Tikatuli, Narinda, Laxmibazar, Tipu Sultan Road, Rathkhola, Hatkhola, Wari, Dholaikhal, Nbabpur and Gendaria are also studied.

2.4 Identifying involved actors

Two broad categories of actors are identified in the research field. Inside actors, on one hand, are those who live in the inner city; the area of Shankhari Bazar in particular and other neighborhoods in general. On the other hand, outside actors are those who do not live in the area but are concerned about the area and whose actions directly or indirectly affect the wellbeing and daily life of the community. All the actors could also be categorized in four levels according to scale of actions

Table 1: Identification and categorization of involved actors in the research field as well as the interviewees for collection of data.

Inside actors		Outside actors	
Individual	Neighborhood	City/National	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual residents of Shankhari Bazar Residents in the area of Gopibagh, Tikatuli, Narinda, Laxmibazar, Tantibazar, Pannitola, Wari, Hatkhola, Rathkhola, Dholaikhal and Nawabpur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shankhari Bazar Nagorik Committee Temple Committee Puja Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Urban Development Directorate (UDD), Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW) Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Ministry of Industries (Mol) SME Foundation, Mol Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning (MoP) Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance (MoF) Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Department of Archeology, Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MoCA) University (DU, BUET, JU) Print media, The Daily Janakantha Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Business organizations (BEIOA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs like BAPA, PABA, BELA Research Institutions like CPD, USG, CUS, ASB, BCAS Development Partners like USAID, World Bank, UN Habitat, UNESCO Urban activists and scholars Members of civil society

Source: Author.

2.5 Data collection, empirical work and analysis

According to established methods for qualitative and inductive research interview, field research and participant observation are considered applicable data collection instruments for the intended research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Yin, 1991). Interviews were both formal and informal with different actors and not transcribed. Therefore, analysis of the interview protocol as well as field notes from field research and participant observation are considered to provide necessary information (Douglas, 1976; Sebeok and Danesi, 2000). For all the information, collected from interviews, field notes as well as different literatures, qualitative content analysis is applied to analyze the data. Content analysis is applied, as it provides to understand the obvious and the implied meaning of the data collected from observations and narratives and analyze them accordingly (Graneheim and Lundman,

2004; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). The following table lists the data collection and analysis instruments for each research question.

Table 2: Data collection and analysis instruments for different research questions

Research question	Data source	Data collection instruments	Data analysis
R. Q. 1	Relevant actors, literature	Informal interview, literature review	Content analysis, interview protocols and field notes
R. Q. 2	Relevant actors, literature	Formal and informal interview, literature review	Content analysis, interview protocols, field notes and literatures
R. Q. 3	Relevant actors, literature	Formal and informal interview, field research, literature review	Content analysis, interview protocols and field notes

Source: Author,

Empirical work for this research included primarily interview and participant observation. Interviews from the group of external actors were selected mostly on purposive sampling in the first place, and then continued on snowball sampling. Interviews for the internal actors started with convenience sampling and, again, it continued with snowballing. For the interviews with the internal actors, in almost all the cases participant observation went alongside. Thus, dealing with the informants in the individual and neighborhood scale was actually a part of the observation, while information about the local context constituted the other components of the participant observation. Interviews with the local residents were informal in nature and conducted on varying extent. Some were very long and detail interviews, some were in the form of group discussion, some were very short dialogue. At least two workshops with some of the local residents in Shankhari Bazar were also conducted. Interviews with the members of the external actors group were conducted as formal interviews.

Participant observation followed standard procedures for ethnographic research, as described by Spradley (1980). It took very simple procedures like getting involved in social and cultural events and festivals, taking foods that is provided, buying local products, getting involved with local people and take part in social discussion as a means of leisure activities, staying with local families etc. alongside taking notes on the participated events as well as notes on the local setting. Most of the notes, if not all, were taken and then assessed based on the matrix of space, object, acts, activities etc. as suggested by Spradley (1980). Afterwards, these notes are analyzed. The following table provides a list of the interviewees that were consulted for the study.

Table 3: List of interviewees conducted for the research

Category	Interviewees	Formal	Informal		Group discussion and Workshop (members)
			Detail interview	Short dialogue	
Individual scale	Residents		11	6	4+7+4+6
	Entrepreneurs		7	10	3+4+4
	Artisans		2	3	3+1+3
	Residents of other inner city areas		5	4	
Total			25	23	39
Neighborhood scale	Shankhari Bazar Nagarik Committee		1		3
	Sanghamitra Puja Committee			1	
	Pratidwandi Club			1	
Total			1	2	3
City/National scale	Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK)	4			
	Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC)	1			
	Urban Development Directorate (UDD)	3			
	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)	3			
	SME Foundation	1			
	Planning Commission	1			
	Economic Relations Division (ERD)	1			
	Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)	1			
	Department of Archeology	1			
	Dhaka University (DU)	4			
	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)	3			
	Jahangirnagar University (JU)	1			
	North South University (NSU)	1			
	The Daily Janakantha	1			
	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI)	1			
	Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association (BEIOA)	1			
	Institute of Architects, Bangladesh (IAB)	1			
Total		29			
External actors	Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)	1			
	Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)	1			
	Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	2			
	Urban Study Group (USG)	3			
	Center for Urban Studies (CUS)	2			
	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)	1			
	Asiatic Society of Bangladesh	2			
	Urban professionals and scholars	4			
	Urban activists	3			
	Members of civil society	4			
	Save the Children (Bangladesh)	1			
	UN Habitat, Bangladesh	1			
	UNIDO Bangladesh	1			
	USAID	1			
	GIZ	2			
	Members of civil society	4			
Total		33			
Grand total		62	26	25	42

Source: Author.

2.5.1 Empirical work

The research has been carried out over a long time-frame, from 2011 to 2017, but with varying pace and intensity. The initial stage, from 2011 to 2013, was the core and most of the empirical works were conducted. The later stage, from 2014 to 2017, was less intense, this was mainly for reviewing the core work that was done previously and getting additional information. The entire empirical work can be described in four phases, as follows.

2.5.1.1 First phase

First round of field work was conducted in August, 2011 in Dhaka. This field work focused on collecting data from internal actors in the area of Shankhari Bazar. Although some other inner city neighborhood and some of the external actors were also accessed. During the field work, in the very beginning, interviews with some architects, who did some studio projects or had personal interest/data on Shankhari Bazar, were conducted to get some basic information. Based on this information and previous personal experience about Shankhari Bazar and some other inner city neighborhoods a work plan designed to collect data. The work plan was designed to execute in three steps.

- **Step 1:** A very detail land use map to be prepared by identifying land use in different time of the day and different days in the week. This would be performed with maps, field notes and photographs.
- **Step 2:** The land use map will lead to identify all the involved internal and external actors and also categories all different types of enterprises there.
- **Step 3:** To conduct interviews with all the identified actors. Interviewees from different groups would be identified with snowball or convenience sampling.

Before the actual fieldwork, this author along with the supervisor conducted a pilot visit in Shankhari Bazar. During this visit access to some houses and interactive dialogue was performed very easily and the study area was considered to be easily accessible. However, the designed method did not work during the real data collection phase. The local community was skeptical about a researcher collecting data on land use with a printed map and they resisted. Gradually it was realized that the residents were a bit annoyed with researchers that will take their time but will get no material and instant gain. A number of student projects and media reports have been conducted on the community and they were, for under stable reason, disappointed with the idea of research. Some people were simply reluctant to interact or agree for an interview. Some

of the local people even showed aversion to researchers and particularly with anything related to 'urban' and 'heritage'.

Therefore, this author had to explain to each and every one in detail about the research. Soon it was clear that only explanation is not enough and also the fact that it would take weeks to convince all the community members. Hence some other techniques had to be developed and applied. Some ideas just came out on the spot depending on the field situation. The adopted techniques are summarized here.

Trust building: It was understood that, being a minority community and a purely minority populated area, the local community was a bit afraid and anxious of interference from the public sector (and also outsiders) due to their bitter experience several times. Thus, it was necessary to emphasize that the author was not from any public institute, but it was for a purely academic research in a German university. Assurance for confidentiality was also important. The fact that this research had no means to harm them had to be mentioned very clearly. It was also important to admit that the research has very limited scope to assure some instant and direct improvement in their life.

Alliance with the local people: Without help from the local people it was very much difficult to get access to the houses and true information. Hence to make ally with the local people, the author had to make relationship with them, for example calling someone sister-in-law, or elder brother, uncle or aunt to some elderly persons. The author also stayed with three families for a while. Consequently, it was helpful and at least two persons assisted the author voluntarily for the rest of the fieldwork.

Instant interaction: Sometimes, it was necessary to interact instantly with the people. For example, one evening, while taking field notes and some photographs, two young male shopkeepers were teasing the author. And then the author turned to them with greetings, explained the research purpose and asked for help. Interestingly, those shopkeepers then felt ashamed and helped the author with some information and also provided access to their house.

Snowballing: It turned out to be a very helpful technique to identify actors, find similar enterprises and interviewees. It, very often, turned to arrange some group discussion also.

Buying products: Sometimes, buying products opened the way for conversation. At least in one case, in a Shankha (conch shell bangle) craft shop, buying products helped to get access to the production area.

Personal ethnic identity: Lastly, the author being a member of the same minority used her ethnic identity to get access to the community. Expressing the ethnic identity eased the relationship, made the author more reliable to the community and finally let her

get some information and hear some stories which would have been very difficult to get otherwise.

Consequently, the planned three step methodology turned out to be like as follows.

- **Step 1:** The land use map was prepared with field notes and photographs only and with help of local people. No map was used on the field. .
- **Step 2:** Actors were identified with the help of local people and the prepared map.
- **Step 3:** Besides the personal (in-depth) interviews, a number of short dialogues were conducted. During some interviews, either the interviewees, voluntarily, asked more people or more people joined the interview and thus, group discussions were conducted.

This empirical work included mainly the actors inside the study area. Informal interviews, dialogue and group discussions were the main tools to collect information from the residents of the area. In this fieldwork 11 detail and in-depth interviews, of varying length ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours, were conducted where at least 8 of the residents were also entrepreneurs. 4 group discussions took place with a group of 4 local residents, a group of 3 artisans, 3 members of a CBO and a family of 4 members along with 3 other local people. At least 21 short dialogues, ranging from 10 to 20 minutes, were conducted with 10 entrepreneurs, 3 artisans, 2 local CBO members and 6 residents. Beside these interactions with the local residents 10 interviews were conducted with several citizens in other inner city neighborhoods, citizens of the Hindu community, people who worked in the study area, architects and urban activists with academic or professional interest in the area and officer in charge of the local police station. Interviews and dialogues were not recorded, instead interview notes were taken and analyzed later.

2.5.1.2 Second phase

Second round of field work was conducted in 2012. This fieldwork was mainly targeted at getting information from the external actors that include actors at city and national level and those who are absolutely external in nature.

External actors, for this research, include mainly medium to high ranked officers in the public and some private sector institutions. Accessibility was felt to be the most difficult part in this phase of fieldwork. Appointments with emails did not work for almost all the cases. Telephone call was more effective to fix appointments, in some cases physical appearance of several times was the only way to fix appointment. The most effective way was snowballing and referral as well as using personal communication and acquaintances. Another difficulty that arose was many of the officials were unwilling

to talk about issues that they considered sensitive such as political pressure, land ownership problem, vested property, communal tension etc. These issues are important factors in this research and it was difficult to get information, some of the interviewees provided their opinion off the record and did not want the information to be used in the dissertation.

In the field work a total of 35 interviews were conducted. Some planned interviews could not be conducted; on the other hand, some additional interviews, which were not planned, were conducted utilizing the opportunities available. These interviews were formal with guideline questions and they were not recorded, instead interview notes were taken. The interviewees were provided a brief text about the research project; however, it was not a form of consent to be signed. Some of the interviewees asked for more information, e.g. questions to be asked in the interview, research questions etc. which were provided to them. In some cases, the interviewees were interviewed more than once.

In the study area of Shankhari Bazar, 7 individual interviews with the residents were conducted, and in those interviews possibility of a workshop was checked. With positive feedback, two workshops were conducted with 9 and 13 participants. The local CBO, named as Shankhari Bazar Nagorik Committee, and residents of all groups like, property owners, tenants, entrepreneurs etc. participated in the workshop. The participants were unwilling to be identified, thus, they did not allow any photograph to be taken and their names to be mentioned. Alongside, several short interviews with residents of different inner city neighborhoods were also conducted on convenience.

2.5.1.3 Third phase

A very short round of empirical work was conducted again in 2014. This time, research findings were checked against the experts' and inner city residents' opinion. This time a total of 14 interviews were conducted. The interviewees included 3 in the academia, 3 urban professional, 2 urban activists and 4 residents from Shankhari Bazar and 3 from other 3 old Dhaka neighborhoods. This round of interviews supported the research findings and did not generate results that are significantly different. Thus, this was considered the point of theoretical saturation that limits the scope of further investigation.

2.5.1.4 Fourth phase

In 2016 and 2017, physical features of the study area Shankhari Bazar were checked once again to check for validity. It remained almost same except minor changes in building height and type of business. Some old buildings were demolished, building height increased for a few, and some changes in the distribution of business in the

ground floor; but for sure the general pattern of business in the ground floor level did not change. The quality of living environment remained the same, as if, it is something perpetual. In addition, several interviews were also conducted with different actors. But these interviews were not strict like the previous phases, intention was to get deeper understanding of the study.

2.5.2 Data analysis

Data analysis was done following the qualitative content analysis in an inductive way. It is applied for both primary data from the fieldwork, and secondary data from the literature. The steps include preparation of data, coding categorizing and abstraction that lead to the answer of the research question (Klaus, 1980; Dey, 2003; Weber, 1990). The key feature of content analysis is the data that is in the form of text, either from literature or primary source, are classified into much smaller content categories (Weber, 1990; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). However, it is to be mentioned that the analysis process was not linear, rather back and forth several times. Collection of field data has been carried in different phases, therefore the analysis has been carried out also in phases. The first phase of analysis provided the basis for the next phases of data collection. So, it was like that, data was collected in different phases and had to be prepared thoroughly for analysis.

The preparation phase started with selecting the unit of analysis. Unit of analysis can vary depending of what to analyze and to what extent. For this research, two types of units were considered. For observation and interview protocols, the whole interview or observation protocol was considered as unit of analysis. For literatures, the whole document was considered as unit of analysis. From the documents or protocols meaning units were derived. Here, meaning units were considered as patterns or statements or words or sentences or paragraphs that relate to the same central meaning and contains aspects related to each other through their content and context (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004).

The next step started with condensation of the meaning units and deriving manifest content and/or latent content (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). Here, manifest content refers to the obvious and visible meaning from the meaning unit and the latent content refers to the interpretation of the underlying meaning of the meaning unit (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Interpretation is involved in both deriving the manifest and latent content (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). For this study, manifest content was more or less directly extracted from the data and interpretation was required to limited extent. Latent content was not always directly available in the written protocols or literatures and the extent of interpretation varies in-depth and abstraction. It also to be mentioned that latent content was not necessary

for each and every meaning unit. This phase was the coding phase. Codes were generated by going through the data again and again. This phase was rigorous and intensive, so that no meaningful information was left out.

After the coding, all the codes were aggregated and grouped together under higher order heading, that this categorizing (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). In content analysis, categories are generated to reduce data and not only to organize data that are similar or dissimilar, but also to bring together observations that belong to a particular group (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Dey, 2003; Klaus, 1980) and this helps to make comparison between these data and observations that belong to the same category (Dey, 2003). In the same way, categories were generated to cluster data that belong to a particular group. For categorizing, again interpretation was required to varying extent. Sometimes, categories were again divided into subcategories as well depending on the volume and varieties of data and level of interpretation.

The last step performed was abstraction or creating theme. In content analysis, abstraction means formulating general description of the research topic linking the underlying meanings together in categories (Dey, 2003; Graneheim and Lundman, 2004; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). Abstraction process continued as far as possible and reasonable and it was perceived as a thread of underlying meaning through the meaning units, codes and categories on an interpretative level (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004).

The entire process can be demonstrated with a simple example as presented in table 4. This table is a sample of analysis conducted for all the different issues that are analyzed for this research. Unit of analysis in this example were the protocols of participant observation and dialogues in Shankhari Bazar about the general cleanliness of the area and the residents' actions, initiatives as well as inclination to improve the situation. Meaning units were derived from the protocols by reading them several times. Next step was open coding. For coding, the manifest content and latent content were extracted from the meaning units. This process required rigorous work. Deriving manifest content was comparatively clear as they were close to the meaning units. But extraction of latent content required careful observation and interpretation to varying extent. Participant observation was much helpful in this regard. In addition, the photographs that were taken during the field work were much useful to get the underlying meaning of residents' actions and their reasoning for doing so. In some cases, latent meaning was clear following the dialogues with the residents as a part of the participant observation. For example, when a person was dumping garbage on the street, he was asked, why he was doing so. His plain answer was everyone did it, so why not he? In another similar case, the person simply replied that the researcher must be from out of the old Dhaka. After the open coding, all the codes were grouped

following similarities and/or characters, which is categorizing. The last step is abstraction, that tried to make a theme of the whole analysis process.

Table 4: Example of content analysis procedure from the participant observation and dialogues about the residents' action and willingness to improve the cleanliness of the physical environment in Shankhari Bazar.

Meaning unit	Coding		Categorizing	Abstraction
	Manifest content	Latent content		
People dump all kinds of garbage in several points along the road.	Dumping garbage in public area.	Lack of concern for public area.	Negligence and disrespect about the environment in public area.	Lack of initiative and willingness to improve the physical environment.
People dump garbage in the road decisively.	Dumping garbage in public area willingly.	Disrespect for public area.		
People keep the rare courtyards dirty, whether in daily use or not.	Dumping garbage in unused private area	Lack of concern and exclusion of unused private area.	Negligence about the environment in private area.	
People keep the inner courtyards dirty that are in daily use.	Dumping garbage unused private area	Lack of concern for private area.		
People blame other residents for dumping garbage in the road.	Blaming others for justifying own action.	Others do it, so I do it as well.	Making excuse for denial of responsibility and initiative.	
People blame the municipality for not cleaning the road properly.	Blaming the government.	It's a public responsibility, not my fault.		
People consider the messiness as the way of life in old Dhaka.	Accepting the messiness.	We are like this. if you don't like it, its your problem.		

Source: Author.

This table appears like a linear process. However, the analysis process was not so linear always, in most of the cases the analysis process went back and forth. This can be mentioned with more detail. For this example of observation for messiness in the Shankhari Bazar, not all the observations were done at the same field duration and not all of them were targeted only for the messiness. Actually, observations were conducted simultaneously on various aspect based on purposefully selected criteria and most suitable convenience and availability due to the time and resource constraints. As all those were participant observation, therefore some short dialogues were also part of the observations. In addition, interviews with the residents were informal in nature and was like narratives, which often turned into group discussions with more than three participants. During the analysis process similar observations were sorted and

compared. This means that the analysis process was conducted in a constant comparative manner (Glaser, 1965). Although it is known as constant comparative, in application it is rare that all the pieces of data are compared (Boeije, 2002). In the same way, only relevant data were sorted, grouped and compared to varying extent. Thus, there were several rounds of analysis process that refined the findings in different layers. For example, to identify the driving forces of urban blight in the South Asian cities, the cities were considered as unit of analysis. Then the first step was reviewing the literature on the relevant issues. Then all sorts of factors that foster or lead to urban blight were accumulated, this was the open coding phase (Boeije, 2002). Next, similar issues were sorted and then these issues were compared and grouped based on similarities and dissimilarities in such ways that the data that belong to the same group are categorized accordingly (Boeije, 2002). Here, comparison was done on various levels, such as among cities, among different categories of blight forces in the same city, among different cities with the similar category of blight forces etc. lastly by categorizing and comparing the driving forces, some patterns of urban blight for the South Asian cities are derived. These patterns are then checked in Shankhari Bazar, old Dhaka and Dhaka to know the pattern of urban blight in particular for this study (see chapter 3 and 4 for the finding on this issue).

In a nutshell, the entire analysis process was carried out in several layers that were connected and often merged. This process was designed following the partial application of grounded theory as described in section 2.1. The analysis tool was content analysis and this tool was used in a constant comparative manner. Entire analysis was done in purely qualitative way and no quantitative analysis method was applied. Although a considerable number of informants were interviewed, but quantification was not applied even in comparing the responses.

2.5.3 Scope and limitation of the research

This research particularly concentrates to the inner city urban renewal in the case Dhaka. Although similar cases in the South Asian and a few examples in the South-East Asian region are consulted, this comparative study is done in a limited scope and a detail comprehensive comparative analysis of Dhaka with other cities lies outside the scope of this research. This study primarily concentrates on deriving the driving forces of urban blight, making a clear understanding of the involved actors and their role in urban blight which in turn leads to make recommendations based on the actor analysis and their likely role in improving the quality of life in the study area considering the barriers in the prevailing condition. This research attempts to make clear understanding of the complex and intricate scenario and does not attempt to make proposal for any particular renewal program or outline any renewal project.

This research has some limitation. Some limitations are very much traditional like the resource constraint, but the rest are mostly contextual. Resource constraint have limited some of the scope of detail and in-depth investigation. For example, the cases in the South Asian context that are studied are not physically surveyed. Real time study of the renewal and similar examples could bring more intense contribution in the study. Particularly, the case of Shahjahanabad in old Delhi and the Bhaktapur Development Project (BDP) in Nepal are very much relevant for this study.

Another limitation is time, it means the real time available for field data collection. Although the study has been carried out for a long period from 2011 to 2017, but actual data collection time was limited in comparison. Also, it is to be considered that that main phase of research was from 2011 to 2013. The next phase was less incentive and there was a break in between.

A third limitation includes the richness of analysis method. This research has been designed as a qualitative research. The number of interviewees and the amount of collected data is fairly large enough to apply quantitative techniques. If it could be possible to apply qualitative techniques also which would have brought more depth and versatilities to the results.

After the Nepal earthquake in 2015, which was followed by a series of earthquakes in the region, the earthquake issue has surfaced and is increasingly being considered as a major concern in Bangladesh. In general, this was not a consideration previously in the local context. Naturally, when this study was conducted, earthquake consideration was not regarded.

And lastly, but not least, generalization of the research findings is limited in scope. As mentioned, the case of Dhaka, and Shankhari Bazar in particular, is studied in the regional framework, but on the other way round, the findings cannot be applied as it for all the other cities studied. Although, Dhaka is not a unique case and it has much similarities with the case of Shahjahanabad in Delhi and Lahore, yet in there are many factors that makes it difficult to take the recommendations as verbatim for other realities. However, as it is very much possible to take the key findings to other realities as reference and they can be applied according to the local context. It is the same for Bangladesh as well, the findings can be easily applied for other cities in the country with careful consideration of the local context.

3 Chapter 3: Conceptualization of Urban Blight and Urban Renewal in South Asian context

Understanding the problems of inner city blight is a layered process. Andersen (2001) recognizes it as a result of interaction among social, economic and physical changes in the cities and argues that deprived neighborhoods also contribute to this interaction and constitute a very important element in the interaction. In case of the Southern cities, the urbanization itself is complicated and the issues of colonial legacy and urban informality make it more complex (Tunas, 2008). Therefore, inner city blight in such context increases the complexity. Urban renewal in Dhaka is the main focus of this research. However, to seek solutions for urban renewal, it is equally important to understand the attributes of urban blight and blighted neighborhoods.

This chapter attempts to look for theoretical underpinning for the research questions. The first segment deals with the first research question on urban blight. It emphasizes urban blight discussion in the literature and the following segment attempts to identify the features of urban blight the South Asian context. The third segment deals with second and third research questions on urban blight on a broader perspective. It checks the theoretical approaches to address urban blight. The last segment depicts urban renewal or similar programs in South Asian region to understand what has been done and what can be learnt from these examples.

3.1 Discussion on urban blight

The first research question tries to understand why and how urban blight takes place in a particular neighborhood. Firstly, it is important to know what answers are there in the theoretical field.

There is no universally agreed form of urban blight that can be found around the world. It is context specific and takes different form in different cities. Even it differs in different parts of the same city. Despite, there are some attributes in common and they endow the blighted neighborhood certain features. Müller et al. (2005) mention some examples, such as a blighted neighborhood can be different according to its location, population or administrative structure etc. It can have specific features like socio-cultural problems (exclusion), economic distress (unemployment), environmental stress (water pollution), urban structural problem (physical isolation) or image crisis (bad reputation) etc. Such characteristics influence the process of urban blight and also the potential for urban renewal. Understanding of such attributes, local initiative, the views of the inhabitants and the local assets and wider resources available are crucial not only to understand the urban blight process, but also to assess the renewal potential.

There are several theoretical models that attempt to explain distress in neighborhoods. Urban blight can develop due to factors related to internal conditions of a neighborhood or external conditions. In the domain of internal conditions there are two major neighborhood change models, the ecological and sub-cultural model. In the domain of external conditions, the political economy model is prominent. All the models have some specific relevance and weakness. However, none of them have answered clearly, yet, why some neighborhood initiate the process of urban blight and exactly what is the starting point.

3.1.1 Ecological model

This model has evolved from works of urban ecologists in the Chicago School. It considers the succession-invasion model, filtering model and life cycle model to explain urban neighborhoods change as part of a natural, deterministic process based on rational, economic choice (Pitkin, 2001; Schwirian, 1983).

Succession-invasion model

Succession-invasion model is analogous to plant and animal ecology theories (Park et al., 1925). In this model, Burgess (in Park et al., 1925) portrays neighborhood change as an inevitable result of competition for space. As the city grows, neighborhoods deteriorate as lower-income residents move into them and push the growth of the city outward.

Filtering model

Hoyt (1933) applied economic theory on Burgess's model and developed the filtering model. In contrast to Burgess's push model, it explains neighborhood decline, with aging housing stocks, as a pull model with new and better peripheral development.

Life-cycle model

Application of the filtering model has led to the development of life-cycle model that describes neighborhood change as a life cycle, as the neighborhood passes from one stage to the other many things change (Hoover and Vernon, 1959). It is understood that some neighborhoods would not go through the whole process, some would continue to loop through the same few stages and some might remain the same stage for indefinite period.

3.1.2 The sub-cultural model

This model emphasizes role of human agency and resident actions determining neighborhood change rather than economic determinism of the ecological models. Pitkin (2001) states that the subculturalists consider the neighborhood as

heterogeneous and there are many subcultures that vary across neighborhoods. Therefore human aspects such as resident confidence, satisfaction, commitment, social networks and Identity based subcultures, such as ethnic identity etc. are important for understanding neighborhood change from a sub-cultural framework (Gans, 1982). In this model, blight in a particular neighborhood is strongly associated with exclusion.

The sub-cultural model assumes that neighborhood decline is not inevitable, and it can be prevented by the strength of social networks in the neighborhood. Pitkin (2001) believes that the contemporary practice of community development, such as asset-building and comprehensive community initiatives are rooted in this very assumption. In asset-building strategies, practitioners seek to identify strengths already within neighborhoods, and build on those assets stabilize and improve the neighborhoods. Through the comprehensive community initiatives, policy makers assume that neighborhood revitalization is principally a matter of coordinating efforts.

3.1.3 The political economy model

The political economy model includes several disciplines like sociology, geography and political science. Pitkin (2001) considers it to be the most influential school of thought in the contemporary urban studies. This model considers neighborhood change driven by economic relations and forces from outside the neighborhoods with emphasis on the social relations of production and accumulation of assets. Political economists recognize fundamental changes in the urban structure, economy and larger political forces to determine the development course of neighborhoods. For example, Downs (1981) believes that the fate of any neighborhood is determined not by neighborhood councils or individual actors but by economic, political and social forces outside its boundaries. Byrum (1992) believes that government policy for the suburb development perpetuate inner city decline. These models are based in neo-Marxian analysis of production, accumulation and space (Pitkin, 2001).

Urban growth machine

The foundational theory of this domain is the urban growth machine (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch, 1987). This theory conceptualizes the development course of a neighborhood is directed by an urban growth coalition. This growth coalition attempts to retain economic power primarily by promoting real estate and population growth. A growth coalition includes urban elites who directly benefit from increase in population and land values, for example real estate and business entrepreneurs.

This growth machine theory, as conceived by the originators (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch, 1987), suggests place as a commodity and thus, neighborhood change is related with the difference between the exchange value and use value of itself. The

growth machines seek to maximize the exchange value of urban space, often, by land speculation or encouraging population growth to increase the property value. An important consideration of the growth machine theory is that, the growth coalitions of urban elites also create an ideology of growth, a belief that the growth produces common benefit for all. The coalitions strive to create material precondition for growth and also convince the community about the importance of growth for their benefit. In other way, the growth coalition seeks to create a growth consensus to eliminate other alternative visions, very often, the purpose of the local government or requirement of the community. This ideology of growth is a critical element of the growth coalitions' attempt, which helps them to influence the policy priorities towards their intended development in case they do not have much success to implement intended growth in cities.

The growth machines' exploitation of exchange value and manipulation of the policy priorities can lead to blight in the neighborhood irrespective of its population structure, social status and wealth (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch, 1987; Logan, 1978; Temkin and Rohe, 1996; Pitkin, 2001). Schwirian (1983) summarizes the statement of the growth machine theory as, there is an uneven distribution across the city in the benefits of development and revitalization; where the winners are always the affluent, the poor and the minority groups are always the losers. Later development in the theory suggests that uneven development is designed to keep the prominence of favored zones in the city at the cost of unflavored zones (Molotch, 1999; Logan et al., 1999).

Urban restructuring

Another stream under the political economy model is referred as urban restructuring which is connected with globalization and progress of information and communication technology. Urban restructuring includes restructuring of both capital and labor.

For Pitkin (2001), restructuring of capital is a parallel process with globalization and corporatization. And all these eventually have led to a new urban hierarchy in which economic power is concentrated in global or world cities. Restructuring of labor has led to transformation of economy from Fordist manufacturing sector to service and high-tech industries as prime source of employment. These in turn has put the established industrialized cities at high risk of urban distress.

Studies have recognized that urban restructuring process have affected urban neighborhood in many ways, and there are also other reasons associated with the urban restructuring that have impact on the urban neighborhoods and also at regional level (Müller et al., 2005; Mollenkopf, 1992; Pitkin, 2001; Castell, 1977; Sassen, 1990; Amin, 1976). Transformation of economy has led to create a dual city of professionals; highly paid and skilled knowledge based professionals who are part of the new economy and

low wage workers who are not. Thus, there is increase of working poor who tend to be spatially concentrated in poorly served low income neighborhoods and where they, very often, have less access to affordable housing. Restructuring has also a role in shrinking of public budget for social services that affects the neighborhood directly. Impacts of urban restructuring is evident in the social and political life of neighborhoods. The urban elite neighborhoods have more access to political power which is utilized for neighborhood development, while the low income neighborhoods are deprived. Another neighborhood level impact is change in demographic characters of urban neighborhoods, which sometimes might lead to marginalization and distress of minority and migrants inhabited neighborhoods. Impact of urban restructuring on social and cultural structure of a society has led to socio-cultural transformation, which causes change in the social value system, ways of living and political doctrine etc. and that might contribute to neighborhood distress.

Colonial development as peripheral capitalism

Though political economy approach is largely focused on the European and North American context, urban development of third world colonial cities can be explained under this approach. From this perspective, colonial cities are considered as function of dependent peripheral capitalism. Such cities are set in a dependent relationship with the metropolitan country and urbanization is not an autonomous process rather purely a function of dependent peripheral capitalism generating inequality, poverty and dependency (Yeoh, 2003). There are several theoretical approaches that elaborate the colonial urban development, colonial legacy and mercantilism to explicate urban blight in the colonial cities (King, 1976; Vance, 1970; Castell, 1977; Hamilton, 1948; Hazareesingh, 2001; Yeoh, 2003). The dependency approach focuses largely on Latin American context. Besides, the South Asian scholarship is known as subaltern theory that incorporates the response of colonized population to the development process (Spivak, 1988).

3.1.4 Synthetic model

The individual models are criticized on several grounds. First of all, all the models are simplistic and tend to overlook the complexity of urban neighborhood rather consider a level of homogeneity in the neighborhood. Secondly, the approaches consider the causes of neighborhood change either external or internal to the neighborhood, but never both together. And last critique is about the geographic scale; the models usually analyze neighborhood change either on micro- (neighborhood) or on macro- (city or regional) scale, but the blend of two scales is absent.

In response to this criticism, there have been attempts to develop a holistic model. Thus, neighborhood change is conceptualized as synthetic model which combines all the

three major model types (Temkin and Rohe, 1996, Zielenbach, 2000). Pitkin (2001) suggests three guidelines for this model to have a more balanced understanding of neighborhood change. They are

1. Acknowledge the complexity of urban life, economic conditions, and social relations.
2. Recognize forces from both within and outside of neighborhoods
3. Analyze change at multiple geographic scales, considering both micro and macro dynamics, and recognize how conception of community is changing.

3.1.5 Conclusion on urban blight discussion and its attributes

From the theoretical approaches that attempts to cover urban blight in the inner city, or in other parts of the city, the most significant fields that expresses the manifestation of blighted neighborhoods appear to be physical and built environment, economic strength of the neighborhood/community and socio-cultural structure. In a wider framework, other attributes are also important such as historical and geographical attributes, political and administrative structure, urban planning and services management structure, regional-global link and external features etc.

It is also important that, not any single theoretical approach is considered for this research, but several theories are considered applicable for this research. Therefore, the research context and findings are explained in light of different theories to get a clear understanding. For South and South-East Asian cities, to understand the context of urban blight, the political economy model is considered more relevant approach. Theories of colonial development are helpful to explain the driving forces of urban blight in the colonial era. The urban growth machine and urban restructuring models are more relevant to explain the urban blight in the post-colonial phase. The most prominent feature of urban blight is most likely that, the external factors play the crucial role in setting urban blight in a neighborhood while the internal conditions of the neighborhood may contribute to the distress marginally or even may not at all.

The theoretical approaches towards urban blight is largely focused in European and/or (post-colonial) North American context. The context in South and/or South-East Asia is different in many ways from the post industrialized societies. Moreover, there are few researches particularly on inner city urban blight and fewer empirical practices on urban renewal. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt the theories to the context of this research.

3.2 Driving forces of urban blight in South Asia

The research question that asks why and how urban blight takes place in a particular neighborhood, can be answered by looking at the driving forces of urban blight and considering the expression of different attributes of the forces. Urban blight is not driven by any single force, rather an array of multifaceted forces. Very often such factors are mutually reinforcing in a negative direction and lead blighted neighborhood to increased deprivation and stigmatization.

Urban development has taken a different course, if compared to the other continents, in the Asian context where almost all the cities have faced (European) colonialism in their history. Urban development in the colony follows a different logic than the case of non-colonial cities and the colonial past also shapes the future development of the cities. Therefore, it is necessary to understand clearly the South and South-East Asian context of urban blight. The next sections briefly describe the context with attempts to explain the facts with relevant theories.

This section describes the driving forces of urban blight in South Asian context. South Asia offers such wide variety of natural, geo-political and population structure that the region is regarded as a subcontinent, known as Indian subcontinent. Thus, it is difficult to have indicators of urban blight that are evident across the region. Hence, it is endeavored to formulate range of factors that contribute to set urban blight in neighborhoods.

Following the attributes of urban blight, in the previous section, and based on limited number of available literatures, the driving forces of urban blight can be categorized in four groups as follows.

- Historical and natural factors that exert uneven development like resources, political importance, colonial rule etc. Some of the factors can be explained with the theoretical approach of political economy, such as colonialism.
- Socio-economic factors that promote distress in certain areas such as demographic composition, social exclusion, lack of awareness, poverty, unemployment etc. The subcultural model of neighborhood change explains many of the factors, for example demographic composition and social exclusion. The ecological model also explains some factors such as poverty and unemployment, at the same time, these factors can be also explained differently with the political economy model.
- Existing urban structure of a blighted area sometimes contribute to the blight in various ways, such as with ageing and dilapidated housing stocks, congested development pattern, lack of recreational facilities, poor and overburdened

urban facilities etc. These factors are mostly associated with the ecological model; however, the political economy model explains the attributes from a different perspective.

- External factors are those that are not directly evolved from or in relation with the blighted area but directly or indirectly contribute to the urban blight. Such factors are mostly related to political and legal issues, such as, zoning concept, building code, political willingness, lack of investment etc. External factors can be explained thoroughly with the political economy model and this doctrine is perceived as the most comprehensive approach to explain urban distress in cities.

These categories of factors are interrelated, act in concert and usually reinforce each other in various directions. The complexity of their connection and working pattern takes different form in different cities.

In the following table, categorization of driving forces, their attributes and theoretical models that offers understanding of the situation are mentioned.

Table 5: Driving forces of urban blight, their attributes and theoretical models.

Driving forces of urban blight	Attributes	Relevant theoretical model
Natural and historical factors	Geographic and climatic property Natural resources Political importance and status in the wider region Colonial rule	Political economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political importance • Colonial rule
Socio-economic factors	Demographic change Urban poverty Property ownership Concentration of ethnic minority Change in social-cultural values Awareness about built heritage Informal economic activities Business environment Crime and communal politics	Sub-cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic change and composition • Ethnicity • Crime and communal politics • Values and awareness Ecological and political economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Property ownership • Business • Informality
Existing urban structure	Housing stock Development pattern Mixed land use Open space and recreation facilities Utility services Traffic management	Ecological and political economy

External factors	Property price Zoning concept Building code Public investment Elitist planning approach Perceived priority of urban development Policy support Political willingness	Political economy
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Source: Author.

3.2.1 Natural and historical factors

Uneven geographical development is not only evident in different parts of a city. For Harvey (2005) uneven development in the regional context leaving some cities in deprivation is nothing new in the capitalist world. He considers uneven geography as the historical interpretation of the political economic development of a region. The most crucial factors are described in brief in the following section.

Geographic and climatic property

Geographical and climatic property could influence growth and development of a region, city and even different parts of the city. In the subcontinent, cities in the mountain regions have different patterns than cities in the desert or costal or flood plains. Besides physical characters, the population structure and even mental construction of the people are also affected by geography and climate which might have deep influence on cities' history.

The eastern part of the subcontinent is flood plain and riverine delta land, which is difficult to access and invade, this kept the region free of foreign invasion for long time in the history and led to develop numbers of small local settlements. At the same time, this remoteness kept the region isolated from the recent development of knowledge and technology. Also climatic properties have affected the extent of physical development, such as hot-humid and corrosive climate in the Bengal has prevented grand scale physical development and led to destruction of ancient relics of civilizations, whereas the dry climate in the north-western region has helped physical development of city regions and ancient relics are still preserved. By comparing the cities of Dhaka, Rajshahi or Sonargaon with the cities of Lahore, Multan or Kandahar such difference could be easily perceived.

Lahore, for example, is placed on the entrance of the path of invaders who invaded Indian subcontinent for centuries. And with each invasion, Lahore was affected, it was destroyed and rebuilt many times in history. The Kathmandu valleys in Nepal and the Yangon region Myanmar were difficult to invade for geographical properties which

kept them free of British colonialism. However, it is considered that, at least, the Kathmandu valley region has suffered and was not developed as it could be otherwise due to the disadvantage of geographical location.

Natural resource

Natural resources could easily be assumed to influence the development of an area. However, at the same time, it is also true that simply availability of resources alone does not guarantee prosperity. Many other factors including the type of natural resources available are important. There are examples in the region that cities without or with minimum natural resources, such as Mumbai, have flourished more than cities rich in natural resource, such as Murshidabad. Yet, in general, cities with access to natural resources, for example mineral resources, have a better opportunity than with cities without access to natural resources. It is seen that the cities in the north-western, north-eastern and central zones in the subcontinent that have minerals are more prosperous than smaller cities, for example in the eastern zone, lacking such resources.

Political importance and status in the wider region

Administrative status and political role play crucial role in urban development. This region has a long history of numbers of political upheavals and followed by rise of numbers of royal dynasties as well as numerous short term rulers. Consequently, the political situation has influenced the development of cities. Previous politically important cities can retain or lose its importance as administrative centers in the new political situation. The development of different cities in British India exemplifies this trend clearly, for example the decline and rise of Delhi compared to the rise of Kolkata which was built by the British from the scratch.

Delhi was the capital of Mughal India before the British occupation, and there were some other native states with different important cities. Kolkata was a village under the Mughal Empire which was transferred to the East India Company in 1698 with two other villages. This village was gradually converted into a township and city with military and administrative set up for the East India Company. Kolkata was named the capital of British India in 1772 and was developed accordingly. In this time Delhi was not under direct British rule and was considered a less important city than Kolkata and received less physical development. After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Delhi came under direct rule of the British crown and later in 1911 the capital of British India was transferred to Delhi from Kolkata. A team of British architects led by Edwin Lutyens designed a new political and administrative area, known as New Delhi, to house the government buildings. The old city core of Delhi was left neglected.

Another example is Dhaka, a city where development is influenced greatly by its political status and role in the region. Dhaka will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Colonial rule

Before the British colonial era, the Indian subcontinent had several cities, for instance, Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Kabul, Lahore, Dhaka etc. famous in the contemporary world for business, education, culture and of course resources. During the colonial age, most of the cities faced decline and respective development took different patterns.

From different examples, such as Dhaka (Ahmed, 1991; Islam, 1996a; Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991; Taufique, 2009), Delhi and Mumbai (Mehra, 1991; Verma, 1993; Datta, 1983; Datta and Jha, 1980; Hazareesingh, 2001; Kosambi and Brush, 1988) Jakarta and Singapore (Tunas, 2008; Yeoh, 2003; Yeoh and Huang, 1996), Lahore (Leonard, 1986; Qadeer, 1983) etc. certain features could be recognized as vital to lead to urban blight in the colonial era.

Colonial interest for development

the primary function of a colonial settlement is to produce commercial surplus for the colonist and serve as a market for the products of the colonist (Hamilton, 1948). Therefore, the issues of development for the local people are usually given the least priority. This development attitude did not protect the interest of the local population in the city rather hindered it. Thus, colonial cities were merely extended hinterland for resource collocation, for example Lahore (Qadeer, 1983), Jakarta (Tunas, 2008) and Dhaka (Mohsin, 1991).

Colonial strategy of urban development

to fulfill the purpose of colonialism, the colony has to be structured with certain degree of development (Hamilton, 1948; Vance, 1970). Urban development, thus, provided in the colonial city is only to serve the purpose of resource extraction and other assigned and purposefully limited activities like bureaucracy, internal/external defense etc.

It is colonial mentality and policy to provide segregation between the colonists and the colonized population. This is reflected in the urban development pattern of colonial cities, with generously served urban settlements for the colonists, even often built according to the garden city principle. While, there are settlements for the native people remain neglected, poorly served or without any urban service at all. For example, this pattern is found in Delhi (Datta and Jha, 1980) and Dhaka (Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991; Taufique, 2009). Colonial urban development trend to keep a distance from the native population very often leave the historical city core neglected, for example in Delhi (Datta and Jha, 1980), Mumbai (Hazareesingh, 2001) and Lahore (Leonard, 1986)

Such urban divide is widely used in this region as a tool for the colonial administration to promote spatial, socio-cultural and economic segregation (Tunas, 2008; Hazareesingh, 2001). This segregation is not only between the colony and colonist, but also to create and promote a subordinate population. A better urban living is used as reward for this segment of subordinate population.

Colonial importance of strategic geographical location

Geographical location is a curtail factor for the development of a colonial city. Due to strategic geographical location, some cities received enough investment.

Singapore is a good example of colonial city that was acquired for strategic acquisition (Yeoh, 2003). It did not have natural and human capital abundantly. The development of Singapore was mainly urban in its character as it served as regional port and colonial administration center. The lack of the human capital, contributed to the coming of the multicultural migrants and slaves, which prominently characterized the city with its different urban ethnic settlements such as Little India, Kampong, Arabs and so forth. While, as Tunas (2008) mentions, Jakarta (then Batavia) though served as trading port and colonial administration point, the urban form was characterized with patches of native vernacular kampong all over its area as well as with modern colonial urban structures. Similarly, Mumbai (Bombay), a trading port city, had an upsurge in investment and population when it was transferred to the British East India Company, and gradually it became the largest and most important port city in the Arab sea with a boom in the city's economy (Kosambi and Brush, 1988; Hazareesingh, 2001). While, in the same time Dhaka was merely a district headquarter (Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991; Islam, 1996a).

Colonial economic policy

to fulfill the colonial production purpose, the local production in the colony is destroyed or minimized to the subsistence level for the native population and the colony is structured with given economic activities only to ensure colonial extraction (Vance, 1970). Castell (1977) argues that industrialization takes place in the metropolitan core of colonial power, and in the colony, the industrial development is only an extended part of that. On the other hand, a colony also must serve as a market for the industrial production of the metropolitan core. Thus, in a colony urbanization takes place without real industrialization and the industrial development is only to process the raw materials for the industries in the metropolitan core.

For examples, the jute processing industries in Kolkata served the British industrial demand. The cotton and textile industry of Indian subcontinent was destroyed and the British India had to serve as a market for the textile industries of Manchester. Consequently, some pre-colonial cities thriving in local business, like Dhaka, which was famous for its textile industry, faced decline (Mohsin, 1991; Islam, 2008; Shelley, 2008).

Colonial interest of socio-cultural change

In colonial policy, social infrastructure is a key issue (King, 1976; Castell, 1977). As it is important to increase the population in the colony, at the same time it also creates risk as it generates tension, conflict and resistance. Therefore, a particular modification on the social setting needs to be essentially established to ensure the continuity of colonial exploitation. This modified social setting is particularly important to avoid social unrest or revolts in the colony that would put the process of production into halt. Thus, an elite group is supported to serve as agent in the form of ally and a sub ordinate group is supported to serve as reserve army; which consequently initiates social segregation and exclusion (Tunas, 2008).

This is also apparent in the case of the Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and British colonialism in India which adapted the Roman concept of Divide et Impera or to divide and conquer, as explained by Tunas (2008) . These types of policies often lead to an institutionalized socio-cultural fragmentation that persists until the modern day. Colonial city therefore is furnished by the spatial expression of the given social infrastructure, social formation and its cultural manifestation. This is very often evident and results in spatial segregation in the city either purposefully created or encouraged, for examples by the creation of particular ethnic ghettos in Jakarta.

Colonial strategy of demography

Colonial rule has an impact on the population structure of a colonial city. It is necessary to increase the population for production purpose, and in areas not important for colonial production population is not a concern.

In British India, as colonial administration turned their back to some cities, a clear decline in population was evident in established urban settlement like Delhi or Lahore and consequently leading to decline (Datta and Jha, 1980; Leonard, 1986). In contrast, some cities had sudden increase in population, but the cities were not prepared to accommodate the population and there were no or very limited efforts to improve the condition. Consequently, some cities had very

poor living condition, for example in Mumbai (Kosambi and Brush, 1988; Verma, 1993; Hazareesingh, 2001).

3.2.2 Socio-economic factors

Besides some historical factors, a number of social and economic aspects contribute to deprivation of city and its different neighborhoods. It is observed that, changes in such factors have taken place comparatively in recent time and in most cases after independence. By the 20th century all the countries in Asia achieved independence. Tunas (2008) characterizes the era of early independence by population explosion, mushrooming urban slums and squatters as well as spatial polarization and segregation emerged as a result of the growing social economic problem owing to colonial past and continued legacy. Along with this continuation, some other factors that adds to the distress are describes as follows.

Demographic change

In the South Asian region, population growth is a typical phenomenon observed in the early days of independence and in most cases it has continued. As a general trend, unprecedented growth is observed in the capital cities, for example in Delhi (Mehra, 1991), Jakarta (Tunas, 2008), and Dhaka (Islam, 1996a) etc. and also in some other cities that are important for economic reason, for example Mumbai (Verma, 1993). Rural urban migration is the single most important factor behind the population growth besides natural growth rate. In most cases, the cities were not prepared to accommodate this influx which, obviously, led to poor living environment in some parts of the city. Moreover, the city authorities, very often, could not keep pace with the population increase and their estimation as well as capacity to provide urban services. Consequently, in many cases, city authorities are compelled to provide quantity rather than quality of urban services for the city dwellers. Another response is, to develop new urban areas with proper and sometimes excess services leaving the overcrowded and poorly served neighborhoods as they are. In most cases, the most obvious result of this influx is mushrooming of urban slums and poor neighborhoods scattered in the city.

Urban poverty

Urban poverty is another force that promotes deprivation. Usually urban poverty is not spread evenly across the cities, and very often found in some neighborhoods in its acute form which are, again, more deprived areas than others. Slums could be considered as easily visible manifestation of acute urban poverty. Mushrooming slums in the megacities of South Asia are recognized problem of urban divide and distress. However, beside the slum areas, there are also deprived neighborhood with urban poverty and poor quality of life. Unlike the case of slum, urban poverty is not always easily visible in the built environment of distressed neighborhoods, for instance in some of the inner

city neighborhoods of Karachi (Van Der Linden et al., 1985; Ahmed, 1992), Delhi (Mehra, 1991), Jakarta (Tunas, 2008) and Dhaka (Islam, 1996a). It might also be the case that such areas are in a better position than slum areas. Urban poverty alleviations programs are, most often, focused in the easily detectable cases of hardcore urban poverty of slums and pavement dwellers, for example the Karail slum in Dhaka. Deprived neighborhoods that are the target of this research are very often overlooked or kept outside the scope of such urban poverty reduction programs. Also for the national poverty reduction strategy, there is a rural bias for actions which limits the scope in urban areas (Marcus and Asmorowati, 2006). The poor and distressed urban neighborhoods remain poor and reinforce the distress which helps the poverty to stay and thus, keep the cycle running.

Property ownership

Property ownership has been appeared as a very critical issue in South and South-East Asian context emerged during the turmoil period of movement against the colonial rulers before independence. The problem shows broadly two patterns in the eastern and southern region.

In the South-East and East Asian cities, ownership problem has been resulted due to unclear or absent legal documents of property or absentee rightful successors. Thus, in the new city administration, some areas have such property right problem which poses difficulty for physical development and the inhabitants often continue the traditional lifestyle, for examples the Kampongs in Jakarta portray this pattern.

In South Asia, the problem is deeply rooted in the cultural and political affairs of the society. In 1947, British India received independence but was divided into two countries according to religion; India for Hindu people and Pakistan for Muslim people which was again divided into two parts East Pakistan and West Pakistan. This partition was followed by massive communal riot and mass exodus of Hindu population to India and Muslim population to Pakistan. The abandoned property has created a serious social problem in almost all the cities in the Indian subcontinent.

In India the abandoned property is named as Evacuee Property. In Pakistan the abandoned property was declared as Enemy Property which has been named as Vested Property in independent Bangladesh (former East Pakistan). In case of Bangladesh, though vested properties are considered as government property, in most cases the person occupies the property enjoys the right to consume it. Due to massive abuse of the regulations, most often the rightful successors do not have the legal property ownership; they simply occupy and consume it. This situation discourages maintenance and improvement of property and creates a severe problem in areas with concentration of vested properties. In the historical core of Dhaka, vested property is a major reason

that leads to decline of housing stock. Similar condition is also observed in the historical core of Delhi and Lahore (Mehra, 1991; Verma, 1993; Qadeer, 1983).

Concentration of ethnic minorities

Concentration of ethnic minorities could sometimes have impact on neighborhood. Specific concentration of specific minority people may have some certain way of lifestyle. Especially if the minority community belongs to lower income group or social status, then the neighborhood is in the risk of social exclusion and poor living environment. For examples, the neighborhood for the *Dalit/Harijan*² people, who belong to a specific minority community with a very low social status, has a very poor living condition (Masud, 2006; Chowdhury, 2009). The Dalit neighborhoods in many other Indian cities show similar character.

Change in social-cultural values

Changes in social, cultural and also political perspective have profound and long term effect on the way of living and, consequently, on neighborhoods which may contribute to surfacing of blighted urban area. Rapid urbanization and globalization are significant factors, among many others, that shape social and cultural values. The young generation is, therefore, more open and probably have different values than the traditional values.

Old city core, at least in the cities of the Indian subcontinent, usually have lifestyle with more public essence and strong community bonding. A shift from this community lifestyle to more individualistic society is observed. A tendency to migrate to another area is also observed in the young generation which might contribute to a vacuum of intellect in the community (Khatun, 2003).

Awareness about built heritage

It is observed that very often people are ignorant about the value of the built heritage; even sometimes people have no idea about the existence of a heritage building. Obviously, quite often it happens that not all the old buildings that are worthy to be labeled as heritage are declared as heritage by the authority. And in many cases the declared heritage buildings are not properly maintained. Buildings which are privately

² Harijan, also known as Dalit, people are a specific caste of Hindu people with very low social status, they are traditionally considered and treated as untouchable. The term Harijan was popularized by Mahatma Gandhi. Traditionally this people work in sectors with very low status, for examples, cleaning of human waste and sewerage, dealing with dead animal, dealing with dead bodies, washing of soiled linen etc. and sometimes also includes low wage sectors like leather work, fishing, oil mill etc. In Bangladesh the term Harijan usually refers to the people who traditionally earn their livelihood from cleaning of human waste and sewerage services, deal with dead bodies of animal and human etc. In Bangladesh these people are also included in the list of Scheduled Caste along with some other caste and tribes with very low social status and resources. For more information on this please see Chowdhury, 2009.

owned are in the greatest risk. Hence, people abuse the built heritage in many ways, like making alteration or addition, having inappropriate use harmful use, overcrowding, over use etc. Consequently, the quality of built environment deteriorates.

Informal economic activities

This is a major reason that leads to poor living quality in a neighborhood. In South and South-East Asian cities, concentration of informal economic activities in the old part of the city is a recognized as a problem by the city authorities also beside the academia (Amin, 1995; Amin, 2002; Amin, 1993). These informal economic activities are generally small scale, home based, horizontally linked and interdependent (Biswas, 2008). Such concentration, though hamper the residential quality, is integral part of a, more specifically, indigenous neighborhood. Along with concentration of informal business, there is a rise in harmful and noxious business observed in some areas. They contribute to environmental pollution and health hazard to the community.

Business environment

Business is an integral part of the urban settlement structures in South Asia. Particularly the historical city core areas traditionally house different businesses and a lot of them could be identified as exclusive to the respective areas (Ahmed, 2008b) And the wellbeing of the community is tied with the business. Therefore, good business environment is really important for the neighborhoods. With the continued inclination towards industrialization, in the traditional sense as industrialization is understood as heavy and light industry relying primarily on mechanical production mode, in different countries have, sometimes, left the small traditional productions out of the development focus. Also other problems such as lack of financial support, increased production cost, decreased demand, uneven competition they are forced into enter with the open market policy, effect of external factors etc. have caused decline in many of the local scale neighbor business environment. Some cities and neighborhoods that are dependent on their business have suffered decline following the decline in business. Decline of Dhaka with the decline in Muslin business is a historical example (Islam, 2008). Also sufferings of the famous Newar city of Bhaktapur (Kleinert, 1977) and Thimi (Bhatta, 2009) in Nepal elaborate the case of urban distress pertaining to the decline in their traditional business. Besides the decline in traditional business, decline in the local industrial production also paves the way for urban blight; the decline in the former mining cities in the north eastern part of India, the misery of the workers and those who live on the supporting business following the shutdown of the Adamji Jute Mill in the city of Khulna in Bangladesh etc. can be mentioned for example.

Crime and communal politics:

High crime rate and communal politics are sometimes associated with some specific neighborhoods and create a bad reputation. In the Indian subcontinent, inner city neighborhoods are occasionally associated with crime and communal politics, but very often they are portrayed and perceived by the city dwellers as dangerous crime zone and area of communal unrest (Mehra, 1991). Such stigma paves the way for social exclusion and inhibits development.

3.2.3 Existing urban structure

Existing urban structure in many cases, particularly in the historical city core, are already in a blighted stage and difficult to modernize following the new urban standards. The major features of existing development pattern that contribute to urban distress are as follows.

Housing stock

Old urban settlements usually have aged buildings which lack regular maintenance. In South Asian cities, most of the inner cities age, at least, a few centuries. The buildings are already very old and in a dilapidated condition and the quality of built environment deteriorates due to lack of maintenance and preservation (Jain, 2004; Qadeer, 1983; Garella, 2006; Ghosh and Shafi, 1980). In general, the inhabitants in the inner city are poor and they do not have financial ability to properly maintain the buildings. Again, overuse is a major cause that increases the enduring deterioration. In case of buildings under public sector conservation, there is lack of proper maintenance. Similar situation prevailed in South-East and East Asian cities in the 60s of the last century (Lee, 1996; Tanabe, 1968).

Development pattern

Old urban settlements, particularly the inner cities in South Asia, were developed a few centuries before. These settlements have developed organically, on pedestrian scale and sometimes within a fortified wall. The roads are very narrow and with numbers of winding lane and by-lanes. Buildings in such neighborhoods have some specific pattern, generally placed very close to each other and not suitable to accommodate contemporary facilities. Usually neighborhoods have evolved and developed to accommodate group of people from same or similar profession, social class or caste and to support some particular business and usually in close proximity to support the interlink between different business. And thus, different neighborhoods have different development pattern according to the community's specific business or social status. This is still in practice, for example the walled city of Delhi (Nath, 1993; Banerjee, 1975) and Lahore (Leonard, 1986; Qadeer, 1983).

In some settlements, for security purpose, there is just one road narrow enough only for horse raiders, buildings are narrow with even narrower alley for a single person and very small doors and windows etc.; the whole settlement is designed as a citadel, for example some areas in the city of Jaisalmer in India.

Such urban settlements are difficult to modernize according to the standards of urban development in the present day. Therefore, old urban settlements are in very often found in a blighted stage.

Mixed land use

Mixed land use, that is living and working in the same place, is very traditional to Asian urban culture. Particularly in South Asia, urban settlements are set up according to specific trade or occupation. This can be understood from the names of urban area; the name of an area is derived according to the business or profession of the inhabitants of the neighborhood (Ahmed, 2008b). Extensive mixed land use affects the quality of living environment in some neighborhoods, particularly in the inner cities where the zoning concept is not in practice. Due to this tradition, sometimes nonconforming and harmful land use is practiced in neighborhoods with further deteriorates the quality (Verma, 1993)

Open space and recreation facilities

Urban recreational facilities and open spaces are unevenly distributed in the cities of South Asia. Usually, as mentioned by Verma (1993) the old urban settlements are densely populated and do not have enough open spaces and other recreational facilities compared to the designed urban settlements. And due to the existing development pattern and dense population, it is also difficult to provide open spaces there.

Utility services

In many South Asian cities inadequate and poor quality of physical infrastructure diminish the quality of neighborhoods. Particularly in almost all the traditional city cores, in addition to the difficulties with existing urban development pattern and dilapidated built environment, physical infrastructure also adds to the poor quality of living environment. Very often, due to the historic development pattern, available physical infrastructures are insufficient and in addition due to overuse and lack of maintenance the quality declines. Furthermore, it is sometimes very difficult for the city authorities to provide additional infrastructure and often there is lack of efforts to improve the situation.

Traffic management:

Traffic congestion is integral part of the traditional, South Asian, city cores. The available roads, being narrow and insufficient, cannot cope with the increasing

demand. Furthermore, motorized, non-motorized and even sometimes animal driven vehicles play on the same road. There is not enough or no consideration for pedestrian movement. On the other hand, vehicular traffic play on the roads designed on pedestrian scale. In Dhaka, traffic management is poor all over the city, but in the inner city it is in extreme condition.

3.2.4 External factors

External factors, in many cases, appears appear to be the most dominating reasons that perpetuate the urban blight in some neighborhoods, particularly the inner city, although they are not directly associated or evolved from the blighted areas. In line of political economy, these external factors are considered very much persuading to uneven development and distress across the city while the distressed neighborhoods have limited capacity to address them, and thus, the elites continue to get nourished at the cost of the marginalized and minorities (Logan, 1978; Logan and Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1999; Amin, 1976; Schwirian, 1983). It is frequently observed that many such external factors directly perpetuate distress for inner city neighborhoods. Some of the significant factors are as follows.

Property price

Serviced urban land is a scarce commodity. Rapid urbanization and extremely high urban growth in Asian cities increases the demand of urban land. Increase in land price also increases the exchange value of urban area in a particular neighborhood. Thus, land use changes to increase the available profit margin, which may not necessarily comply with the existing land use in the neighborhood. Generally, this sort of change takes the form of commercial and industrial use of residential land. Land price is also manipulated by interested groups, most often real estate business, elite etc. with their vested interest with land speculation. This high exchange value also perpetuates urban slum areas as a form of land speculation. Dhaka is a very good example of this pattern, this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Zoning concept

Though mixed land use is traditional to Asian urban settlement, the city authorities have opted for zoning concept for contemporary urban development. Application of zoning concept is more or less limited to the newly designed urban areas and almost absent in old urban areas. This zoning concept has directly and indirectly encouraged mixed use development in the city cores as well as organically evolved areas.

Building code

Building regulations have profound impact in the built environment of a neighborhood. In the Indian case, it is observed that floor area ratio and setback regulations do not

really consider the density and availability of land, rather guided by the road and occupancy type of buildings (Karteek, 2015). And it is the same in Bangladesh. For example, in Dhaka, the urban fabric in the inner city and in the new development is quite different, the inner city is congested, with small plots and low rise buildings with almost 100% plot coverage. But the building code does not consider this difference and is applicable to the same degree across the city. The same floor area ratio for a low density with large plot area and high density with much smaller plot area is not logical. Again, absence of transferable development right diminishes the right of an inner city dweller. The consequence is illegal buildings and buildings that do not comply with the building code and existing urban fabric.

Public investment

Public sector investment is unevenly distributed across the city. It is not uncommon that the city authorities, rather than investment in the old urban settlements, opt for developing new urban areas with proper or at least better urban services. Again, urban elites, who have more access to political power, influence the public policy to their favor, and eventually are able to channel the public investment in areas decided by them (Logan and Molotch, 1987).

Elitist planning approach lacking public participation

Formal spatial planning is an imported ideology in South Asia. Spatial planning came along with the colonial rulers. In Indian subcontinent, the British initiated the spatial planning in line of the British system, but of course modified to fulfil colonial extraction purpose. After independence, the same system has been continued. Thus, South Asian spatial planning system is heavily bureaucratic and elitist in nature. It is influenced by local politics and very often used as political instrument which fosters uneven development across the city (Mehra, 1991; Nath, 1993). As a top down approach, public participation is almost absent in the process, consequently the community's need is not always fulfilled. Dhaka and Delhi can be named as example.

Perceived priority of urban development

Urban development is not, of course, the most important issue for the national government in developing countries. There are many other issues that get priority over urban development. For example, in Bangladesh food security is the most important issue and then comes other issues like education, health, fuel, disaster management etc. Therefore, budget required for proper urban development cannot be arranged leaving other more important and critical sectors.

Policy support

There is lack of policy support, both on national and city scale, to secure urban development in a proper way in many developing countries. For example, in Bangladesh there is not yet any integrated national urban policy.

Political willingness:

Political willingness is vital for equity and implementation of spatial planning. In many South Asian cities, political willingness appears as a great hindrance for spatial planning purpose and also in implementation, as it is used as a political instrument. Mehra (1991) has provided a very detailed analysis with the case of Delhi how political system and party politics affects urban renewal scheme in Shahjahanabad. His study appears to be very much relevant and valid for many of the sub-continental cities, like Dhaka.

3.3 Discussion on urban renewal

The second and third research questions seeks to look for approaches to address urban blight. It is, therefore, necessary to know what are the theoretical approaches to address urban blight are available, what has been done in the South Asian region to address urban blight, what can be learnt from those examples and how to improve the approaches.

The complex nature of urban decline requires multifaceted and comprehensive solutions. Hence, a range of different policy and programs have been developed with parallel complexity. Müller et al. (2005) have organized the traditional urban renewal or similar approaches, like regeneration or revitalization, to follow three concepts; needs-based, revitalization-potentials-based and area based. They are briefly described here.

3.3.1 Needs-based approach

The Needs-based approach focuses on a community's deficiencies and problems, on what it lacks, rather than on what it has (Arefi, 2004). The concept behind this approach is, communities with specific need should receive treatments that address those need. This is, often, a top down approach as there is sufficient dependence on the external agents.

Planners usually attempt to rank different areas to identify the target areas for renewal or revitalization and provide limited assistance to other areas. This process is called triage and following methods can be applied to do it.

- **Geographical Information Systems (GIS):** overlay maps with blight indicators, to find areas with high concentrations of negative characteristics.

- **Proxy Variables:** a set of single variables are chosen to act as a proxy for the combined effect of the various expressions of blight.
- **Multidimensional Indices:** an index using weighted linear combination of different variables to find the most distressed areas.
- **Multi-criteria Approaches:** factorial ecology to distinguish small areas in the city.

However, assistance only to some areas may not stabilize the overall city and may in a way encourage depopulation of neighborhoods to be redeveloped eventually for other uses (Weiler, 1983). This approach is criticized for equity and also efficiency questions.

3.3.2 Revitalization-potential approach

This approach considers the fact that some neighborhoods have specific needs, but they also have some specific potential for revitalization. Therefore, this approach targets to identify those neighborhoods with the greatest potential for revitalization (Connerly, 1996). First, a set of priority areas with urgent needs, like dilapidated buildings, conservation of architectural or cultural heritage etc. are identified. Then local planners identify the potentials for revitalization or redevelopment with the opinion of different experts. This approach is criticized to result in resources being shifted away from neighborhoods with significant needs, but with less apparent potential for revitalization.

3.3.3 Area-based community development (ABCD) approach

This approach considers community members as active change agents rather than passive beneficiaries or clients. Traditional top down approaches put the community in a passive role, as the community is addressed only with their material need and these material needs are considered sufficient to confront the urban blight. While the ABCD approach encourages the inhabitants to participate in the decisions that are made to upgrade their places or improve their quality of life. This approach is a practical application of the assumptions in sub-cultural model of neighborhood change.

Communities' social capital and their perception towards the built environment are considered more critical than their material need such as housing or employment. Therefore, not only the human and social skills, but also the existing commercial, associational and institutional foundations that already exist in the community are considered the basis for revitalization. Asset mapping is the first step. Also SWOT analysis is used to identify the hidden and potential asset of the community.

The importance of such area based initiative is established with empirical evidence in European examples, for instance. Kvarterløft in Denmark, Social Integrative City in

Germany, New Deal for communities in England, Politique de la Ville in France and Big Cities Policy in the Netherlands. Müller et al. (2005) summarizes some basic considerations for the success of this approach as follows.

- Importance to activation and participation strategies,
- High performance organization and communication structures,
- Emphasis to clearly defined tasks, duties and decision making powers and
- Shift of responsibilities to the local level which will encourage community participation.

Andersen (2001) suggests that this approach is merely a local effort against social exclusion; rather the main purpose of this approach is to stop exclusion and make the urban area livable for the excluded. Though, empirical examples from European urban areas show different conclusions, Müller et al. (2005) conclude that there is also theoretical rationale for area based approach.

3.3.4 Conclusion on the urban renewal discussion

For urban renewal in South and South–East Asian cities, none of the three mentioned approaches alone can address urban blight absolutely. Consequently, all the three approaches need to be considered as they reinforce each other. The local context also requires careful consideration for selecting a renewal approach. This research emphasizes the application of area based community development (ABCD) approach and also necessity of need based approach to limited extent.

This theoretical exercise leads to identification of certain factors that are important to understand urban renewal in South and South–East Asian context. The first consideration is conceptualization and planning of renewal program. Here a very important aspect is, how urban renewal is perceived; if it is considered as housing renewal and conservation or slum upgrading or improvement of living quality etc. Other aspects include policy support, available resources in the wider framework, selection criteria of distressed neighborhood as well as task priority, public participation etc. Next comes the focus of renewal program. It requires thoughtful consideration of one or more target for the distressed neighborhood such as restoration or conservation, improvement of physical infrastructure, social mobilization, economic promotion or income generation etc. Last, but not least, implementation of the renewal program demands meticulous consideration for aspects like coordination among different actors and authorities, flexibility and adaptation of the program following unexpected situation, maintenance and follow up, political willingness etc.

3.4 What has been done so far: Renewal experiences in South Asia

Urban renewal is not a frequent occurrence in South Asia. Although building renewal and conservation efforts have taken place sporadically. However, area based renewal programs are rare and not yet a major topic in urban research. Again, urban renewal is almost synonymous to housing renewal or conservation and primarily perceived as similar to slum upgrading in the South Asian countries (Verma, 1993). In India, it can be said that it is primarily perceived as slum upgrading and executed as housing renewal and conservation. The examples in Pakistan do not differ significantly in nature from the Indian experience and so does the case of Bangladesh. The Nepal examples are different compared to the examples of the sub-continent and they also consider improvement of the living quality of the community beside restoration and conservation. In Bangladesh, a few built heritage conservation efforts are evident but not in the neighborhood or city scale.

The significant examples in South Asia include

- Conservation of the walled city of Lahore, Pakistan,
- Bhaktapur Development Project, Nepal,
- Urban renewal for the walled city of Shahjahanabad, India,
- Bombay (Mumbai) Building Repairs and Reconstruction, India and
- Panam Nagar Conservation, Bangladesh

Beside these projects, there has been several areas based upscaling projects of varying extent in the sub-continent. To name a few, Dharavi redevelopment Project in Mumbai, Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Karachi and several upscaling projects in the Korail slum, Dhaka. These projects are purely slum upgrading in perception, scope and implementation. The Dharavi project aims to upgrade the Asia's largest slum located in Mumbai, India. The OPP is considered a very successful project to improve the sanitation and sewerage facilities of a low income township called Orangi in Karachi, Pakistan, which is basically a slum (Khan, 1996; Zaidi, 2001). Success of OPP in 1989 has initiated three more programs OPP-RTI (Research and Training Institute) involved capacity building, OPP-OCT (Orangi Charitable Trust) involved in microfinance and OPP-KHASDA (Karachi Health and Social Development Association) involved in health activities (Hasan, 2000). Though very much successful, OPP is purely a slum upgrading project and unfortunately it has not been replicated widely and even with very limited success when replicated in other slum areas in Pakistan (Zaidi, 2001). The Korail slum in Dhaka has received a significant share of all the projects associated with slums in the city (Khan, 2007; Sinthia, 2013; Biplob et al., 2011). A large number of external actors as well as development partners are actively involved in Korail, to name a few Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC), Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), UNICEF Bangladesh, World Bank, WaterAid Bangladesh, Actionaid Bangladesh etc. and Korail

is also a very popular topic in the academic research field. However, these examples are kept aside, as this research concentrates on area based urban renewal for inner city neighborhoods, and not on urban slum areas.

3.4.1 Conservation of the walled city of Lahore, Pakistan

Lahore is the capital of the state of Punjab in Pakistan. Lahore, a city which dates from at least 1050, and was probably found before 7th century CE. The city was invaded, demolished and rebuilt several times in its history. Present day Lahore showcases political and cultural influence of at least three distinctive timeframes, namely the Mughals, The British and the Independent Pakistan. The walled city of Lahore was laid in the Mughal era, intervened during the colonial rule and subjected to tremendous population pressure and consequent distress after independence, a typical character of the major cities in the Indian subcontinent.

Kron (1996) portrays briefly the background and description of the conservation program of the walled city of Lahore. Being located along the major trade route through Central Asia and Indian subcontinent and supplemented by the lack of geographical defense, the city was regularly affected by invasion, loot and destruction until it was settled by the Mughals in 1525. It took the form of fortified city in 1605. The following maps from Leonard (1986) show the present day walled city and its relation in the wider Lahore region

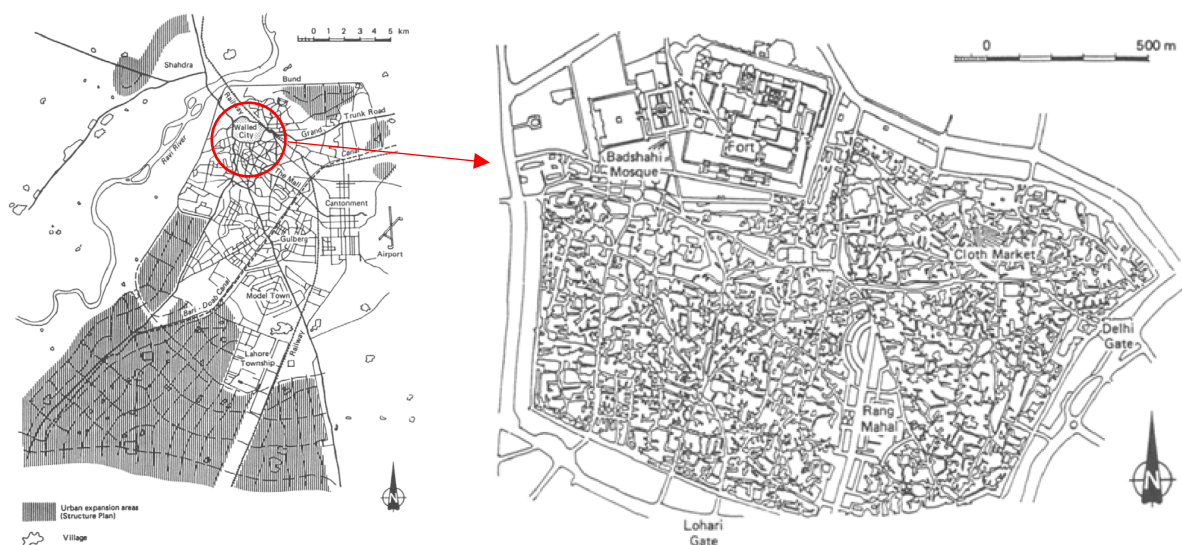


Figure 8: Map of Lahore (left) and blow up of the Walled city
Source: Maps from Leonard (1986).

In the period of political instability in the Indian subcontinent, from the middle of 18th century until the *British Raj*³, Lahore faced decline both socially and physically. Afterwards, the British chose to locate their defensive and residential quarters outside the walled city, and much of the city fortification was damaged or destroyed in the process. In 1849, major portion of the wall was destroyed for more control of the area and resale business of bricks. The wall was partially rebuilt in 1864. Major physical changes by the British rulers includes establishment of urban services, such as piped water, rail road etc., outside the walled city and significant expansion of the city leaving the old walled city core. The early era of independence in 1947 is marked with communal strife and the city was razed again widely, both physically and culturally. The city of Lahore accommodates remnants and presence of the Mughal empire, British Raj and independent nation state of Pakistan. The walled city core is an archetype in this region with dense population, intense small scale manufacturing and wholesale business activities taking advantage of cheap labor from the concentration of urban poor.

The Conservation Plan for the Walled City of Lahore was laid out by the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) (Kron, 1996). The document presented a series of recommendations concerning the physical decay of historic structures in the city, the "visual clutter" of newer structures and infrastructure and the encroachment of various unregulated elements on the city's fabric. The Conservation plans were prepared by the Pakistan Environmental Planning and Architectural Consultants (PEPAC) in 1986 as the expansion of a project begun in 1979, the "Lahore Urban Development and Traffic Study" (LUDTS). This study was conducted by the LDA and funded by the World Bank. It included adaptive reuse of monuments, relocation of street traders and conservation. The focus was on conservation effort on specific areas of the inner city to best utilize the limited resources. It is important to mention that the conservation plan was also the first criterion set by the World Bank for financial support.

The study (Hankey, 1994) had identified 1,406 buildings within the city with high architectural or historical value and presented a series of conservation proposals for the buildings as well as social and economic programs to address the roots of their degradation. These recommendations include

- Relocation of strategic actions from the walled city
- Planning activities and studies for both the walled city and central area of Lahore

³ The British Raj literally means the rule by the British Crown in the Indian subcontinent between 1858 and 1947.

- Institutional development for utilization and application of existing resources and legislative structure
- Preparation of a Manual for Conservation and Building Renewal and improved maintenance practices
- Traffic improvement and management
- Upgrading of the housing stock and urban services
- Control of new development to conform the existing and historical pattern of urban fabric as demonstrated by the public authorities
- Conservation of individual listed structures

Following the guidelines, as stated above, some pilot projects had been outlined in detail; six projects were outlined for immediate action which include

1. Identification and demarcation of the city fortification walls
2. Conservation of the Wazir Khan *Hammam*⁴ also known as *Shahi Hammam*
3. Conservation of the *Chawk*⁵ Wazir Khan
4. Conservation of the Delhi Gate and Kashmiri Bazar
5. Restoration of Dhyani Sing *Haveli*⁶
6. Conservation of the open space of Gurdwara⁷ Baoli Sahib

These built forms includes structures dating from early British colonial times, both residential and commercial, and monumental structures from the Mughal Empire. At least two of these six projects were directly implemented and funded by the World Bank through the Punjab Urban Development Project, which are restoration and reuse of the Delhi Gate and Shahi Hammam. The Shahi Hammam mainly suffered from surface damage of fresco works which was restored and the *hammam* was assigned as a tourist center with some facilities for vocational training for women. These two built structures are owned by the government. The following images from Kron (1996), Aslam (2016) and Hankey (1994) depict the Wazir Khan Hammam before and after the conservation project as well as assigned new use for the *hammam*.

⁴ It means the royal bath.

⁵ Chawk means open space, it is usually a public place and a typical public open space in the bazar area in the Mughal cities.

⁶ Haveli means palace.

⁷ Gurdwara is the temple of the Sikh community. Lahore had a large community of Sikh population before the Partition of India in 1947. After the partition, most of them migrated to India.



Plate 1: Interior view of the central roof of the Wazir Khan Hammam before and after restoration (left column) and a detail of the restored fresco in the ceiling (right).

Source: Left column images taken from Kron (1996) and right image from Aslam (2016).

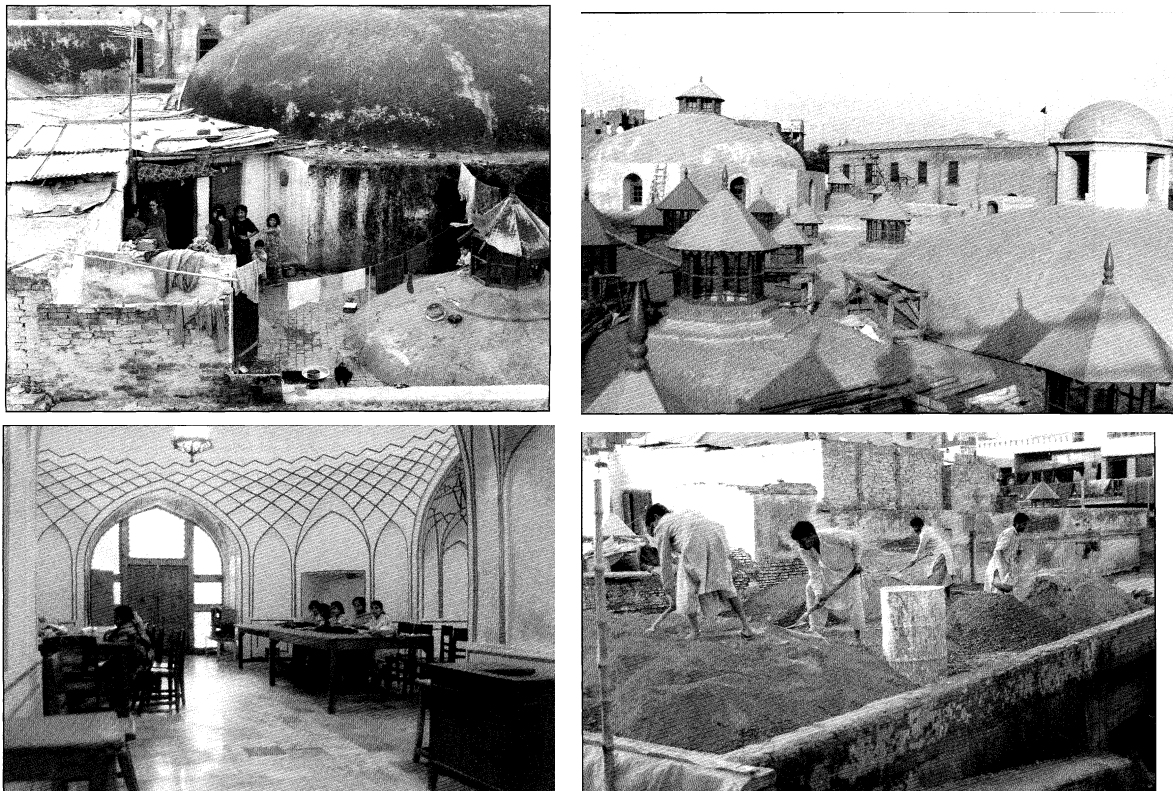


Plate 2: (clockwise) Original condition of roof with a family in residence in the Wazir Khan Hammam, view across the roof when restoration was near completion, local people were engaged in the restoration work girl's vocations training center in the restored hammam as a new use.

source: Images taken from Hankey (1994).

Discussion

Though identified as conservation of built environment and counter the reasons of the degradation, in reality the entire program is limited only to physical conservation and restoration activities for implementation. Limitations and lone dependence on the World Bank fund made it difficult for the authority to select the site on their own. Only

areas of popular tourist destinations and publicly owned built structures are considered for real action; probably the underlying reason is the lack of resources which lead to concentration on certain blocks and demonstrate as showpiece for further funding. The program opts for making the sites free from encroachment, however the definition of encroachers is not identified and made no distinction between squatters, encroachers and residents. Most probably, just to avoid the turmoil related to eviction of encroachers, the entire attempt is not evident to take place, rather a safer way of concentrating in the public buildings are observed. Also the fund allocated for compensation and improvement for the residents who would be affected by the program is not dispersed as the legal residents were not identified at all. There is also a conflict in the policy of conservation.

The PEPAC program the attempt to instate a series of guidelines and regulations which the residents of the city must follow and thus, reduces the choices of the resident in determining the form of their surroundings. On the other hand, it is stated to initiate attempt to encourage a sense of ownership, pride and respect among residents which relies upon the living culture of a place to perpetuate the existing physical culture, although allowing for the changing needs of the people. And there is lack of policy support to make a balance where these two approaches, which are not necessarily in conflict, would act in accord.

In short, this program was conceptualized as building renewal with a target of restoration and conservation of selected built structures. And it was implemented in that orientation, restoration of two publicly owned built forms.

3.4.2 Bhaktapur Development Project, Nepal

Bhaktapur Development Project (BDP) is probably the most famous and referenced urban renewal project in Nepal as well as in this region. This project had laid the foundation of the trend and practice of urban renewal and community development program in Nepal which is still continuing. This project started in 1974 and continued until 1985 and was carried out jointly by the His Majesty's Government (HMG) in Nepal and Government of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Haaland (1982) and Kleinert (1977) provide a brief of the project background and different aspects of different phases of the project. The town of Bhaktapur, the smallest of the tree cities in the Kathmandu Valley, is considered to be founded in 865 under Raja Ananda Deva. Like Kathmandu and Patan, Bhaktapur also gained prominence during the Malla rulers and even was the most important city in the valley for a while, most of the famous Newar architecture and artifacts of Bhaktapur dates from this

period. Following the conquest of the Valley by the *Gorkhas*⁸ in 1769 under Raja Prithvinarayan Shah, Kathmandu gained power and gradually became the most important city in the Valley which affected Bhaktapur strongly, particularly the traditional trade with Tibet was weakened severely and the city never recovered from this decline. In next two centuries the city suffered gradual and permanent decline which was even made more ruthless by the event of earthquake in 1934 that caused considerable physical damage. Finally closing of the Tibetan border in 1959 brought to an end of the traditional trade and construction of the new Kodari highway to China (Tibet) which left the city unconnected accomplished the misery of the once famous city. In the 1960s the HMG of Nepal decided to establish a university in Bhaktapur, but instead the city was considered for a military garrison while the university was established in another city named Kirtipur. Following the series of unfortunate circumstances, the investors, entrepreneurs and well off citizens preferred to move to Kathmandu and only those who had nothing else to do left behind. Steadily the city became stagnant in many fields and earned the reputation as dirty, poor, traditional and stubborn. However, beside these hardships Bhaktapur, as a part of the Kathmandu Valley, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

The BPD was initiated on the success of a restoration project which was a wedding gift from the Government of FRG to the wedding ceremony of the Crown Prince (*Amatya*). The restoration of the Pujari Math in Bhaktapur which was completed in May, 1972 with assistance of the Department of Archeology, HMG of Nepal. Following the success of this restoration, the HMG of Nepal decided to carry out an Urban Renewal and Development Project in Bhaktapur in cooperation with Government of FRG. Kleinert (1977) describes the objectives of the project as three folded, such as follows

- Preservation and development of the city's rich religious and architectural monuments as well as its unique character of an almost untouched medieval Newar town. Instead of the idea of preserving a museum town, preservation of objects with specific value and simultaneously preparation of the city's necessary evolution of the economic and social structure has to be regarded as the only adequate way to balance economic and social development.
- Improvement of the water supply, sewerage and general hygienic conditions for the wellbeing of the individuals and households as well as the improvement of the conditions of general and economic development.
- Promotion of the city's economic activities.

⁸ Indo-Arian immigrants from the Indian plains.

The entire project was carried out in three phases, but the aim was always to improve the living conditions of the people in Bhaktapur. Different phases are described here very briefly.

The first phase: 1974-76

The first phase concreted on conservation and preservation aiming not only to restore individual monuments, but also to areas of architectural value such as roads and squares. Beside renovation, reasonable future use of the restored buildings to safeguard proper maintenance had to be identified. A large number of public and semi-public buildings have been restored by this project, such as Chikanpha Math, Pulanchota Math, Jangam Pati, Sithu Math Dattatreya Temple, Bhimdyo Temple, Tschiba Stupa, Laxmi Narayan Temple etc. (Kleinert, 1977). Besides building renovation, house plinths, open wells called *Hiti* and ponds called *Pokhari* were also renewed to preserve the uniqueness of the Newar town. Grimm (2012) has presented images of the Dattatreya Square during and after restoration.



Plate 3: Dattatreya Square during (left) and after (right) restoration

source: Images from Grimm (2012).

The local people were trained and employed in the restoration works which provided employment for the city. There was initiative to involve the city people in the decision making process in the beginning through forming several groups and arranging meetings to discuss how works should be carried out in certain areas. Haaland (1982) argues that this communications had a positive effect and afterwards as these meetings discontinued people felt alienated. Consequently, this lack of involvement of the city people in the planning and decision making process proved to cause problems in the second phase which had to be addressed.

The second phase: 1976-79

During this phase, infrastructures works continued. The existing water supply and sewerage system was badly damaged by several earthquakes and the poor hygienic condition of the town made the urgency clear for restoring the sewerage and water supply system. By the end of this phase almost 40% of the town had been covered by

sewers, water supply system and paved streets. In addition, two major planning documents were finalized, the Bhaktapur Town Development Plan and Land Use Plan.

The project trained and employed the locals for the infrastructure works and those people, being quite practical, did not want the project to end, as it was set for 1979, with a fear to lose their income. Project proposal and main planning for this phase was prepared by short termed German consultants, it was increasingly being clear that the targets they set were unrealistic for the local context. Also an important target of this phase to transfer the responsibilities to the Nepali experts did not happen for various reasons. The consequent reluctance from the local population as well as the experts made the BDP to reformulate the strategy and make adaptation to deal with such problems.

Changes were made to lead a carry-over phase in 1979-80. This phase was primarily aimed to fill the gap between the BDP and the local people as well as within the BDP. It was done by forming a task force with BDP staffs and Nepali professionals from various institutions that are involved in the BDP. A set of sector papers, prepared by the task force laid the foundation of the third phase and helped the BDP to change its idea according to the local context and requirements.

The third phase: 1980-83 (85)

This phase concentrated in transferring the responsibility to the local experts as well as making the local community involved in the process and economic promotion. Instead of programmed goal of physical development, the goal was also concentrated towards developing human resources for economic promotion as poverty was identified the main problem in Bhaktapur. Economic promotion was reinforced from six levels,

1. Training local consultants for assisting existing small businesses.
2. Training entrepreneurs to establish new industries.
3. Creating a credit fund for the entrepreneurs.
4. Craft training for artisans.
5. Provision of industrial space.
6. Developing appropriate technologies.

Establishment of a Handicraft Center, encouraging existing tourism by restored restaurants and promoting business those are attractive for the tourists, supporting the local pottery artisans to improve their techniques etc. are direct outcome of this phase. Infrastructure work from the previous phase continued and completed.

Warlow and Prajapati (2008) conclude that the BDP has paved the way for modern Bhaktapur while preserving the living historical urban environment with intervention in the following sectors

- Restoration and preservation of historic and religious monuments
- Water supply and sewerage
- Schools
- Basic urban social infrastructure
- Health education
- Community development
- Economic promotion
- Land development and housing

Kleinert (1977) has shown the concentration of BDP activities in Bhaktapur in the following map.

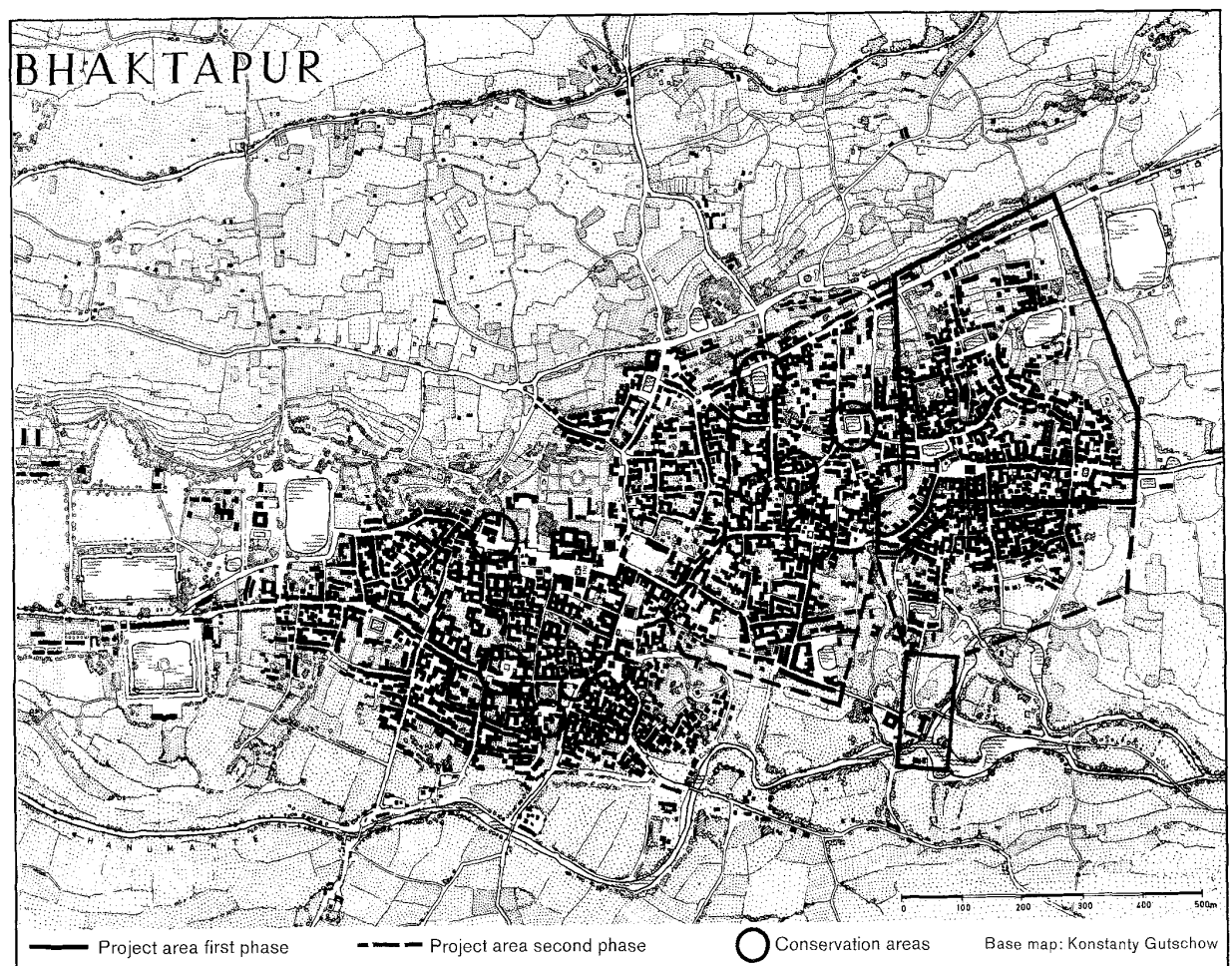


Figure 9: Map of Bhaktapur showing the areas of BDP activities

Source: Map from Kleinert (1977).

Discussion

Though most of the literatures date from the project period or shortly after that, the impact it had on the life of the local people was not entirely reflected. In later date, there had been a few literatures dedicated to this project, but they do not offer much information to get a clear understanding. However, in those literatures as well as in other literatures on renewal and related issues, BDP is frequently mentioned as an example that could be followed.

It appears that this project perceived renewal as a way to improve the living condition of the residents of Bhaktapur. To do that, the entire project was fragmented according to priority of task and strategy of implementation. Areas of intervention were identified as built environment, physical infrastructures, health, income generation as well as economic promotion and education. In the beginning large scale restoration and conservation works were done which also made the residents to keep trust and participate in the program. In next phase, infrastructures were improved which had a considerable impact on the general health condition and then attempts were made to improve the economic capacity of the people. Lastly, emphasis was put to long term issues like improvement of education and transferring of responsibility to the local authority and people.

Still there are some specific situations which may make it difficult for others to follow this example exactly. The project is heavily dependent, though not entirely, on financial and technical support from the FRG for a decade. Such long support is an extraordinary example. The restoration works have taken place only for the public and religious structures leaving the private buildings outside. BDP had the advantage of Nepal, and Bhaktapur in particular, being an established tourist destination and also abundance of built and cultural heritage in the town which is, again, rare.

3.4.3 Urban renewal for the walled city of Shahjahanabad, India

Shahjahanabad is the name of the walled city of Delhi. It was built in 17th century as the Mughal capital, shifted from Agra, on the river Jamuna. The city was, as Datta and Jha (1980) inform us, originally designed for 60,000 people with an area of approximately 600 ha enclosed by a wall punctured with seven major gates from which radiated highways to all parts of the Mughal Empire. It was planned with a concept to have different identified areas earmarked with specific uses and trades and following Indian Vastu Shastra⁹ with the man macrocosm analogies such as spine as Chandni

⁹ The norms of architecture and planning in mediaeval India. Traditionally it relates architecture with a mythical human figure.

Chawk, ribs as streets, head as fort, heart as *Jama Masjid*¹⁰, organs as *Sarai*¹¹ and wall as skin. The original layout of the city was changed with the advent of the British regime and the introduction of railway line along with growth of industries and commerce contributed to population growth in an increasing rate (Garella, 2006). This physical change is shown with maps by Jain (2004).

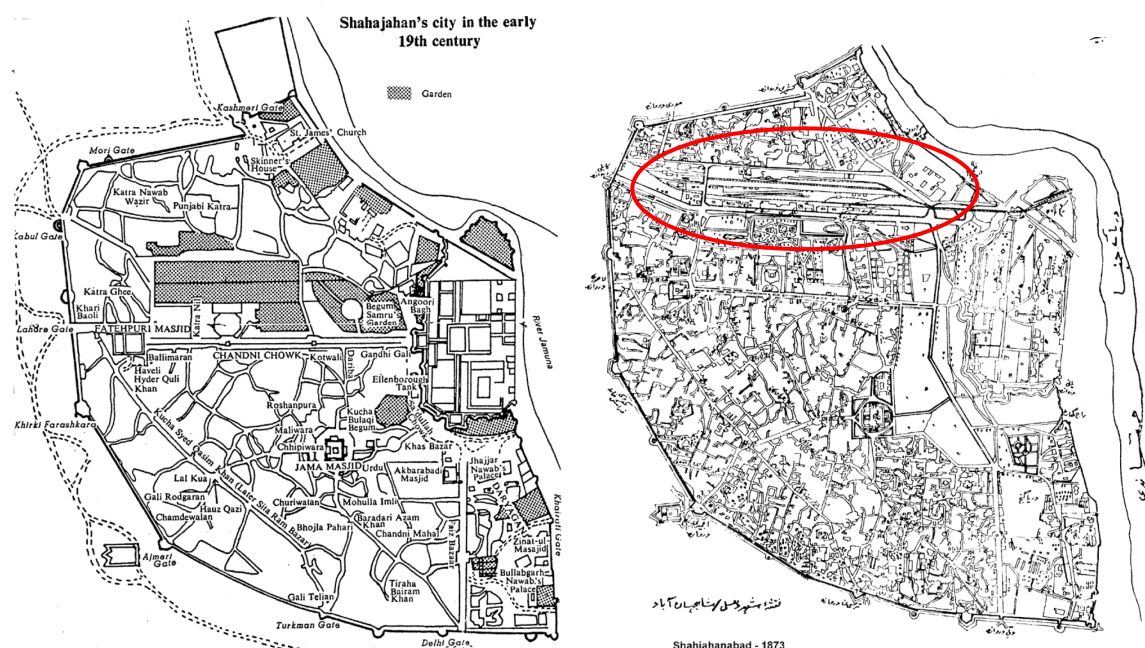


Figure 10: Walled city of Shahjahanabad, Delhi in early 19th century (left) and in 1873 (right), the marked area shows the physical change with introducing the rail station by the British government.

Source: Maps taken from Jain (2004).

Verma (1993) considers that Shahjahanabad bustles with all kinds of 'unintended' activities, its exclusive residential area has reduced to about 180 ha and its population increased manifold and plays a significant economic role as a major distribution center for North India with some 350,000 persons employed mostly in the informal sector and with an annual turnover in billions. With advancement of commercialization, residential population started to decline and in public memory, Shahjahanabad is a mess of chocked traffic movement, intense commerce with not only wholesale but also crowd pulling activities, a maze of dark narrow alleyways, and a great tangle of billboards and electric cables (Dutta and Bandyopadhyay, 2012). The walled city is plagued with problems of traffic congestion, infrastructure deterioration, unauthorized construction, dilapidated housing condition and makes traders of the area to convert their residential premises for non-residential uses.

¹⁰ Masjid means mosque. Jama/Jam-e/Jameh/Jameh Masjid refer to a mosque in any locality where the special Friday Prayer takes place. Usually it is also the place of gathering and Eid Prayer. Not all the mosques are considered as Jama mosque.

¹¹ Sarai means rest house.

To improve the situation, urban renewal for the walled city has been in the agenda of the city authority since the 30s and introduced as a part of the spatial planning for the entire Delhi since 60s. There have been consecutive 3 plans for the walled city and probably this is the longest continuous renewal program for an inner city in the South Asian region.

Master Plan for Delhi (MDP) 1962 approach

The first MDP was designed for the period of 1961-81 and it spelled out a comprehensive renewal strategy for the walled city.

Verma (1993) and informs that the renewal scheme opted to decide the degree of deterioration and obsolescence, by quantifying through multiple indexing, and identify areas for conservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment. The most prominent feature was the intended relocation of obnoxious and village like industries and decongestion to a target of 100-150 pph from the existing 1500 pph and rehabilitating them by operating housing schemes near the walled city. The land that would be available consequently was to be used for providing essential community facilities beside upgrading the infrastructures. Dutta and Bandyopadhyay (2012) argue that the prescribed standard for provision of community facility and infrastructure was substantially lower considering the paucity of land in Shahjahanabad. The entire Walled city was identified into three major components of urban renewal on the basis of the degree of deterioration and obsolescence which were conservation areas, rehabilitation areas and redevelopment areas. The Slum Wing of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was in charge of implementation. However little is mentioned in literatures about the success of implementation, rather it is mentioned many times that not much was made to improve the walled city condition (Nath, 1993; Mehra, 1991; Verma, 1993; Jain, 2004)

Master Plan for Delhi (MDP) 2001 approach

The MDP 2001 proposes urban renewal for the walled city as one of the four declared special area in Delhi. Special regulations have been worked out for this area and incorporated in the Development Code. Since 1961, the population in the walled city increased to saturation and there was large scale infill by commercial use replacing residential use. The main objective of the MDP 2001 regarding Shahjahanabad was to clean the area from noxious and hazardous industries and trades to check further commercialization and industrialization of the area and to revitalize the same to its glory of the past (Jain, 2004).

The MDP 2001 had the following strategies for special regulations

- Designating the walled city as residential are instead of the commercial hub for Delhi.

- Limitation and relocation of non-residential activities with priority for noxious and hazardous industries and trade.
- Retention of public and semi-public uses and services
- Control of built environment with allowed floor area ratio (FAR), set back on the street front and architecture style according to the specific urban renewal scheme
- Designating the walled city as Controlled Conservation Area with special plans for conservation and prohibition of any modification of any building without such plan.

Jain (2004) has shown the proposed conservation plan and transportation network for Shahjahanabad in MDP 2001 in the following map.

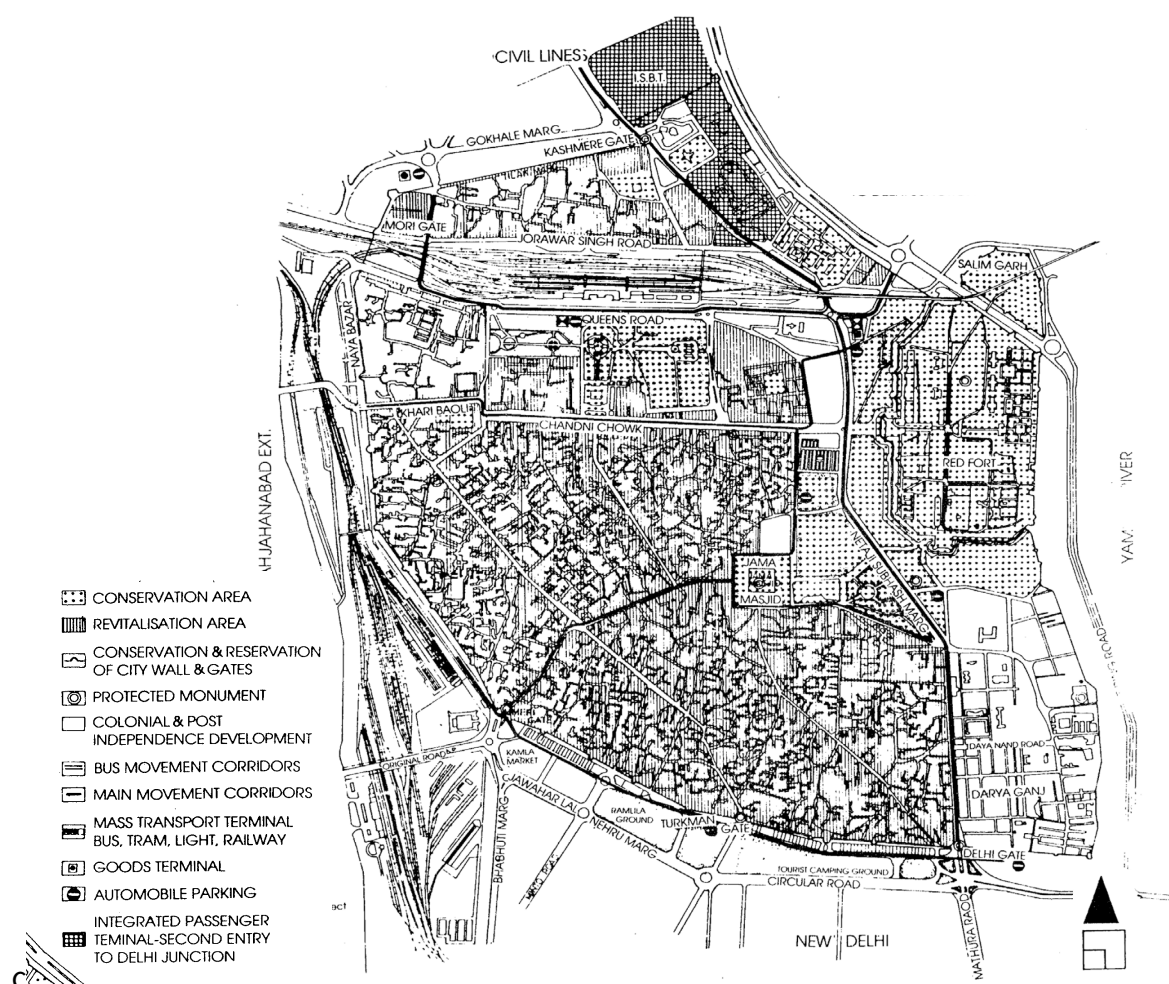


Figure 11: Proposed conservation and transportation network for Shahjahanabad in MDP 2001.

Source: Jain (2004).

The MDP 2001 stipulated preparation of a list of protected buildings as well as restricted development around such monuments and preparation of detailed urban renewal schemes by the respective local bodies. However, the master plan is criticized

to be merely a planning document, considering the scope and implementation, just to save the face of planning (Puri, 2012). There was merely any development in preparing such urban renewal schemes due to lack of resources, clear institutional and legal framework, lack of public participation and zoning disincentive inherent in the master plan. The target of relocating industries was regarded to be unrealistic in the local context as it could not be implemented. Instead of improving the situation, some of the special regulations worsened, for example the allowed FAR being much less than the existing resulted in massive scale unauthorized redevelopment and land use change.

Master Plan for Delhi (MDP) 2021 approach

The third MDP, again, focuses on the conservation-relocation-redevelopment approach for the walled city like the previous plans (Delhi Development Authority, 2007). The MDP 2021 specifically concentrates on four different issues. The first is to regenerate the lost glory of Chandni Chawk by means of conservation and protection of the historical monuments in the area, optimum physical transformation without large scale demolition, development the main street as a boulevard, free and frequent transport services, restriction of unorganized shops and street vendors and pedestrianization for a tourist friendly environment. Development of metro corridor is the second one with a view to decongestion of the area. The third is, the classical, relocation of noxious and hazardous industries and businesses. The fourth issue is improvement of building bye laws suggesting front and rear setback of buildings, incentive for additional FAR, liberalization of land use time bound approval etc.

Not much have been done so far regarding the regeneration of Chandni Chawk. But the metro station in Chandni Chawk has reduced the congestion and parking demand of the area and increased accessibility. Large scale relocation of industries and business has continued to fail; however some small efforts have worked, the flower wholesale market is shifted from Chandni Chawk for example. The optimistic policy for building bye laws improvement appears not to be compatible for the walled city following its special built environment.

Discussion

Urban renewal for the walled city of Delhi is not a special plan and it is integrated in the overall spatial planning program for the entire city. This is probably the longest urban renewal or regeneration program in this region. Even with almost 50 years of planning practice for the walled city, there is little proof that it has barely made tangible improvement of Shahjahanabad and the residents there as the set target (Nath, 1993; Verma, 1993; Datta and Jha, 1980; Yamane et al., 2008; Puri, 2012). There are some limitations of this program. The MDP is a locally financed program and there was no special consideration for financing the urban renewal. Besides, lack of clarity in

delineating responsibility and legal framework helped to get the detail urban renewal schemes never prepared. Some policies for renewal are also criticized for being unrealistic and not appropriate for the walled city, such as relocation of business and industries which are the sources of income for most of the residents, introduction of conversion charge, development charge, betterment charge etc. where the land ownership and land control is a very big problem, making land available from a situation with 100% plot coverage etc. In scope and implementation, the urban renewal scheme is merely perceived more than a slum upgrading, also the implementation responsibility is delegated to the slum department of the planning authority. Very often the intended urban renewal and redevelopment policy is considered as fairy tale and they are considered not to make justice for the community.

3.4.4 Bombay (Mumbai) Building Repairs and Reconstruction, India

The city of Mumbai was known as Bombay until 1995, when it was changed by the State Governments of Maharashtra arguing the Bombay is a corrupted English name of the original local name Mumbai and it is an unwanted British colonial legacy for a city which dates from 3rd century BCE or earlier. In this section, the name Bombay would be used for the city as the project under discussion took place when the name was Bombay and also mentioned so in the official documents for the project.

Bombay is a colonial port city and it shows all the characters of a typical colonial port city and also exemplifies the morphological pattern of such cities (Kosambi and Brush, 1988). This Portuguese and British had a long struggle for the hegemony over Bombay, and finally in 1661 it was in possession of British Empire. The city as seen today was largely shaped during the British Raj. The greater Bombay consists of the island city of Bombay and the suburban area covering almost 348 km² as earmarked in 1951. The following figure shows the morphological development pattern of a typical colonial port city and its expression is observed in the subsequent images from Dinoda Photo LLP (2015) showing the Indian bazar, European sector, western type CBD and commercial waterfront in the early 20th century Bombay.

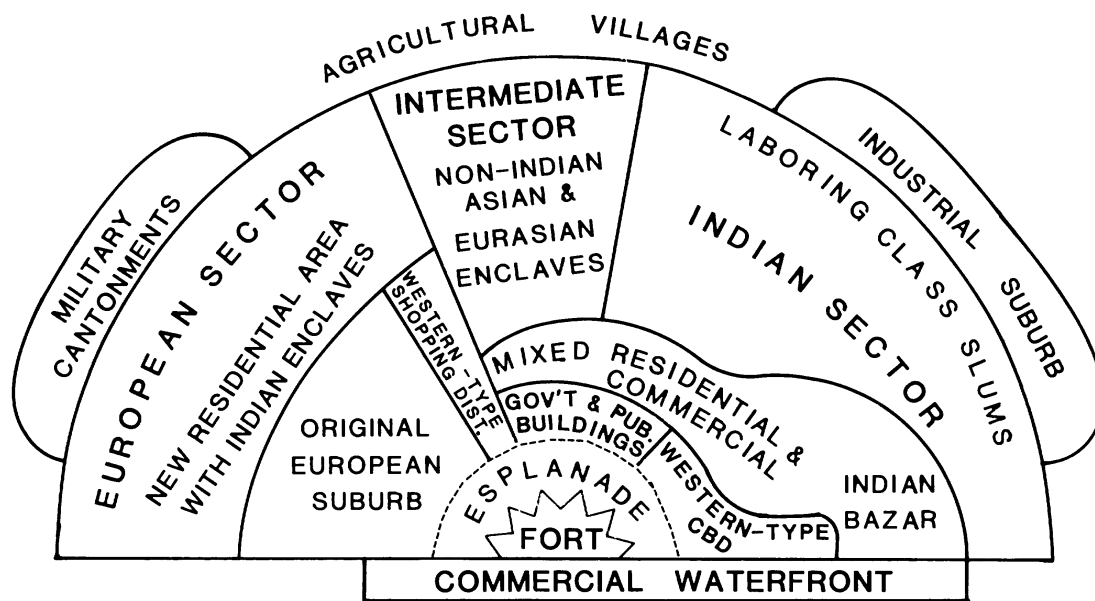


Figure 12: Schematic diagram of a representative Colonial Port City in India
Source: Kosambi and Brush (1988).



Plate 4: 1900 Bombay. (clockwise) Zaveri Bazar an area mainly for local business, Wodehouse Road in Colaba which was a European sector, D N Road adorned with impressive buildings built and Marine Drive demonstrating the boom period of late 19th century.

source: Images taken from Dinoda Photo LLP (2015).

Bombay is one of the most populous cities in India as well as in the world while a large section of the urban poor live in the inner city *chawl*¹², which largely constitute dilapidated housing in Bombay, though *chawls* are also found outside the city core. In the early 20th century *chawls* mushroomed in the city to accommodate mostly the single migrant labors and it turned out to be a very good housing business for the private sector. Later the Port Trust also started constructing similar housing for renting to its employees. Overcrowding was acute following shortage of housing with initial low per capita space and high density. Thus, the housing, used by many more than it was designed for, began to deteriorate faster than it was supposed to be and even collapse of dilapidated structures took place (Muttagi, 1988). The following images from Saxena (2006), Narayan (2016) and IRX Live (2016) would provide a glimpse in the Bombay chawls.

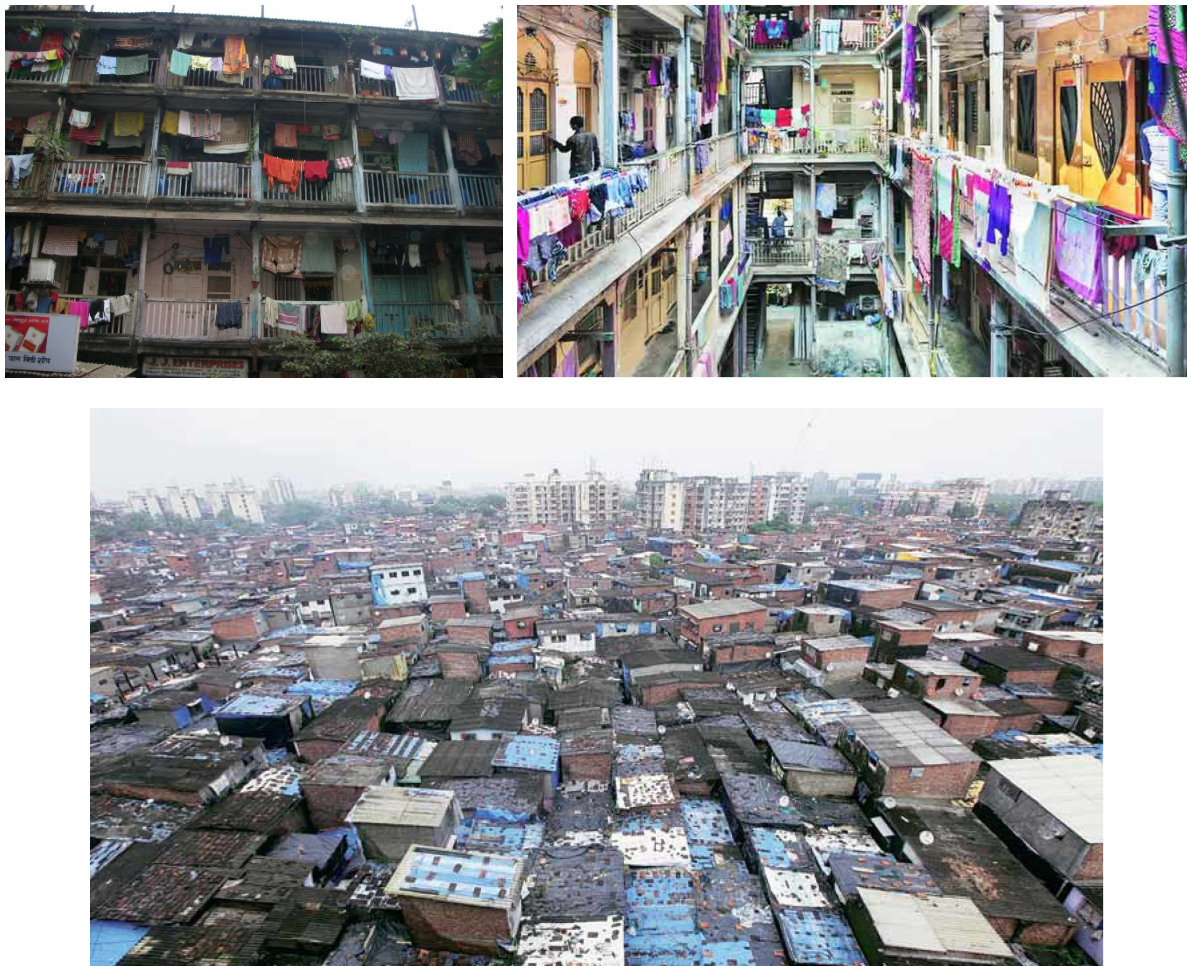


Plate 5: (Clockwise) Typical Mumbai chawls and one of the numerous congested chawl districts in Mumbai (down).

source: clockwise: (Clockwise) Saxena (2006), Narayan (2016) and IRX Live (2016).

¹² This is specific housing type found in India, typically a chawl is a 4-5 storied building with 10 -20 tenants depending on the rooms available in the building. Chawls are abandoned in Mumbai (Bombay) as constructed in the early 20th century following the boom in industrial and economic development of the city.

Muttagi (1988) and (Verma, 1993) have portrayed the renewal effort by the public sector to improve the inner city *chawl* housing situation. In 1969 the state government introduces the Bombay Building Repairs and Reconstruction Board (BBRRB) Act whereby the BBRRB was set up, with association of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the State Housing Board. The purpose and scope of intervention was

- Repairs of identified buildings provided the cost of repairs is within the ceiling limit
- Reconstruction of identified buildings deemed beyond economic repair
- Provision of transit accommodation to occupiers of ceased buildings that collapse or are under repair/reconstruction

For structural repairs, buildings are identified with an area wide priority list prepared by the BMC with the suggestions from the residents, their associations and elected representatives. The cost of repair had to be within the permitted ceiling or the board would undertake repair with the condition that the occupiers bear the additional cost. The Board also granted no-objection certificate (NOC) to the owners for such repair and reconstruction. Until 1989, almost 9043 buildings were repaired by the board and 2966 under NOC.

Reconstruction was considered only when strictly required. Reconstruction schemes allowed units ranging from 15.86 m² to 68 m² with common facilities and 16.70 m² of self-contained units. Units were rented to the old occupiers. Development control rules were relaxed permitting higher tenement densities, additional building height and greater floor space index (FSI). Besides the NOC by the owners, option was available to transfer the ownership of reconstructed buildings to a cooperative society, formed by at least 70% of the occupiers, which had to raise 40% of the estimated cost and the Board arranges the rest as a loan from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO). Until 1989, some 252 buildings were reconstructed by the Board while only 3 under NOC.

Transit accommodation was not popular among the occupiers, as it disrupted their daily routine. And also availability of transit accommodations was limited and sometimes far from the area. Therefore, it was attempted to carry out the works without significant displacing of the occupiers.

Discussion

This project could be identified as purely housing renewal and heavily criticized in academic discussion (Muttagi, 1988; Verma, 1993) Besides improving the housing stocks, this is not any area wide program which could more effective; there were no other efforts to improve the life of those urban poor living in the dilapidated *chawls*. Even considering it as housing renewal, some limitations are observed. The

identification process of buildings requiring repair or reconstruction is critical; following the physical condition of the area technical structural analysis becomes practically next to impossible, and there is another problem that each ward must have a fair share of buildings in the list which is perhaps a political issue for the elected representatives. Reconstruction schemes faces unreasonable delays and bottlenecks; such as land acquisition and litigation, technical approvals for plans, refusal of tenants to vacate, public sector landlordism entailing the acute rental problem etc. Lack of a maintenance program is a sever draw back for the entire project; which have resulted in urgency of repair in the repaired and even reconstructed buildings just in few years. Lack of public participation is also a criticism for this project, it was entirely decided and implemented by the Board with minimum scope for the residents to take part in the decision making and execution rather conforming with the authority. And obviously there was acute shortage of financing. It is also necessary to mention that the BBRRP recognized some problems and modified a few things, at least there were some efforts to improve the financial scarcity in different ways and some other issues were also taken for consideration such as ownership transfer, infrastructure upgrading etc.

3.4.5 Panam Nagar Conservation, Bangladesh

In Bangladesh there are few examples of restoration and conservation. However, the examples are limited strictly to historical buildings or monument, for example Ahsan Manjil and Lalbagh Fort, and in few cases the entire built complex such Shalban Vihara complex in Mainamati. But rarely there has been any practical area based urban renewal or any other similar or relevant approaches. The only attempt, till to date, is the Panam Nagar Conservation in Sonargaon. Unfortunately, this project is not completed and not been implemented to the extent it was planned for. The project is also accused, by conservationist architects, for untruthful and faulty restoration that has entirely ruined the authenticity of the restored buildings to their original style.

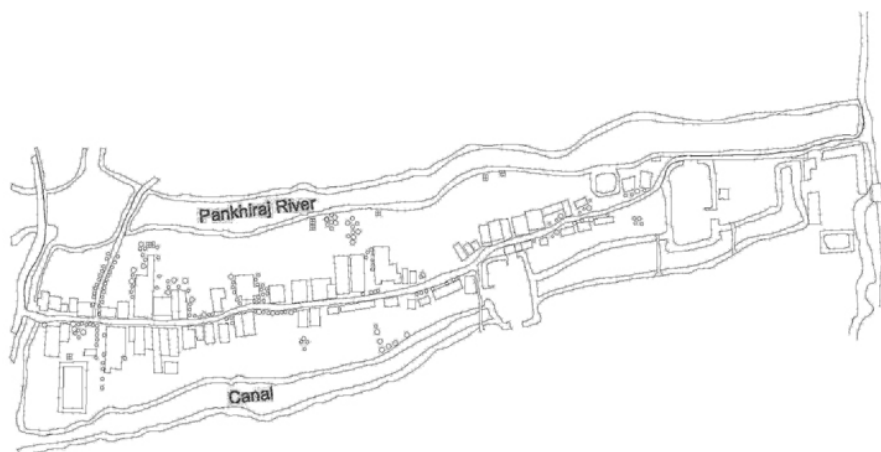


Figure 13: (*The Daily Star*, 2015a)

Source: Ahmed (2012).



Plate 6: The panamnagar area, old buildings along the street in 2015.

Source: Zahed Khan in The Daily Star (2015a).

Panam Nagar is located to the northern side of Sonargaon. Sonargaon was the capital of independent Sultanate of Bengal from 1338 to 1538 and also an important city under the Mughal rule until 1608, when Dhaka was declared as the new capital and it superseded Sonargaon. In early 19th century during the colonial rule when Kolkata was made capital, a group of wealthy Hindu merchants from Kolkata returned to their ancestral land in Sonargaon, and started to build a small township at Panam area with richly detailed buildings. The township stretches along a road about 5 meters wide and 600 meters in length. The urban street front houses mostly 2 storied buildings made of small bricks, lined up on the either side. There are about 52 buildings on either side of the road. The architectural styles reflect the socio-economic condition and lifestyle of the merchants and the elite class in the British colonial period. The area is protected by two canals parallel to the road. After the Partition of India in 1947, the following communal riot in 1964 and the 1965 Indo-Pak war, most of the Hindu owners, who were religious minority, shifted to West Bengal or other parts of India. In 1965, the Government passed an order by which the property of those minorities was declared 'Enemy Property'. From then, the township is owned by the government. However, the properties are occupied by users who have encroached and illegally occupied them, except only a few with legal lease of the property from the government. Abuse of properties and modification ruining the original style of architecture is a common feature of the township.

In March 2003, Panam Nagar area was marked for protection and conservation under the Antiquities Ordinance of 1968. The residents, who had been living there for nearly

40 years, refused to give their possession to the government; they had declared that they would even sacrifice their lives for Panam and demanded that the government should permanently allocate the properties to them. In the year 2006, the army backed government took control over this area and a conservation project was planned with the help of UNESCO and implemented by the Department of Archeology (DoA). However, very shortly after the restoration began, architects and urban activists' community protested vigorously claiming that the building restoration was being done wrongly and it destroyed the authenticity of the original characters of the buildings, as showed in the following images. Ultimately the conservation project was abandoned. The area was made free of occupation and the road was made free from any kind of vehicular movement.



Figure 14: Example of improper restoration and conservation at Panamnagar, before (left) and after (right).

Source: Ahmed (2012).



Figure 15: Example of improper restoration and conservation at Panamnagar, before (left) and after (right).

Source: Syed Zakir Hossain in (The Daily Star, 2008a)

There has been a severe scarcity of relevant documents on this conservation project. Most of the available literatures (Mowla and Reza, 2000; Husain, 1997; Rahman, 2007b; Mowla, n.d.) predate the conservation project and are primarily focused towards description, relevance and importance of conservation of the architectural

heritage. The UNESCO report was not published and therefore not accessible for people who were not involved in the program. Thus sources of information are primarily limited to interviews and local newspaper articles. Probably the only study that provides a understandable picture of the conservation project is by Ahmed (2012). Mentioning the local newspaper articles, again, Ahmed (2012) describes how the DoA executed the restoration works by hiring local masons and relying on them without any kind of research, documentation and engagement of any expert like archeologists, architects or historians. The DoA intervened in 16 out of 51 buildings of Panamnagar and experts opined that the DoA made more harm to the buildings in name of conservation than it was made by the wear and tear of time and abuse by the users in the past five decades.

3.4.6 Urban renewal in South-East and East Asia

In the South-East and East Asian cities, urban renewal is more frequent and studied also (Tanabe, 1968; Yeoh and Huang, 1996; Yeoh, 2003; Law et al., 2009; Lee, 2000; Lee, 1996; Ha, 2004; Yung and Chan, 2011; Sirisrisak, 2009; Shin, 2010). However, it is again almost synonymous to housing renewal. It started in the 60's, the beginning was remarked with clearing the squatter in the city center and providing high rise commercial and residential buildings, for example in Singapore, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Seoul. Afterwards, starting from the 70s, there was a clear shift from mass scale demolition to conservation of the built heritage and also to promote traditional built, cultural, business and social heritage. Singapore shows the premium example this trend which has also gained, in parallel, a commercial achievement with tourism. Nevertheless, South-East and East Asian trend is primarily property led renewal program which endows more responsibility on the individual owner.

3.5 Conclusion on the urban blight and renewal discussion in South Asian context

From the literature review on theoretical conceptualization of urban blight and renewal strategy and experiences in South Asia, it becomes clear that there is a research gap in this field and the research questions under investigation are not answered yet.

This review of literature also reveals some core features of urban blight, that include poverty, unemployment and social exclusion in varying degree. It also becomes clear that urban blight has some specific pattern in South Asia. But in the domain of scientific research it is not yet recognized like the inner city problem in European or US literature. Thus, for this research it is important to build an understanding based on the common factors that lead to or initiate or accelerate urban blight. And thus, certain fields are

significant to determine the character and state of inner city urban blight. These field need to be investigated through empirical work.

Following the literatures, it appears that for renewal the most important factors are local people, their need, aspiration and management of local assets. As urban renewal is comparatively rare phenomenon in South Asia, considering examples of other cities in Asia, it appears that there are other aspects too, to name a few stakeholders' interest, property right, political willingness etc., that play significant role in the fight to address urban blight. Urban renewal, with the goal to improve the living condition of the residents in the blighted neighborhood, needs to consider the roots of urban blight and not merely treat the expression of blight which is most conventional and commonly practiced scenario in this region. Thus, interventions must be specific but flexible enough to adapt to the context. These sectors of intervention could be identified as fields of direct improvement efforts for example built environment, urban services etc., fields of long term efforts such as income generation, skill development, health sector etc., areas of lifelong enduring efforts such as education, cultural integrity etc. on one hand and to have fruitful effects of such improvement efforts it's also necessary to administer dealing with perception, motivation and strategy, dealing with the obstacles and, last but not least, dealing with the diverse role of diverse actors involved.

In a nutshell, after reviewing the theoretical conceptualization of urban blight and renewal as well as the experience in South, South-East and East Asian cities, it comes to identification of specific fields for detail investigation in the study area. These include driving forces of urban blight, areas of improvement and role of relevant actors. The following table and figure illustrate the kernels of this chapter.

Table 6: Sectors for detail investigation in the study area.

Driving forces of urban blight	Areas of improvement	Role of actors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and natural factors • Socio-economic factors • Existing urban structure • External factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical environment • Housing stock • Social environment • Economic strength and business environment • Urban services • Conservation of heritage and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual residents' actions • Neighborhood organizations • City and national level actions • External actors' involvement

Source: Author.

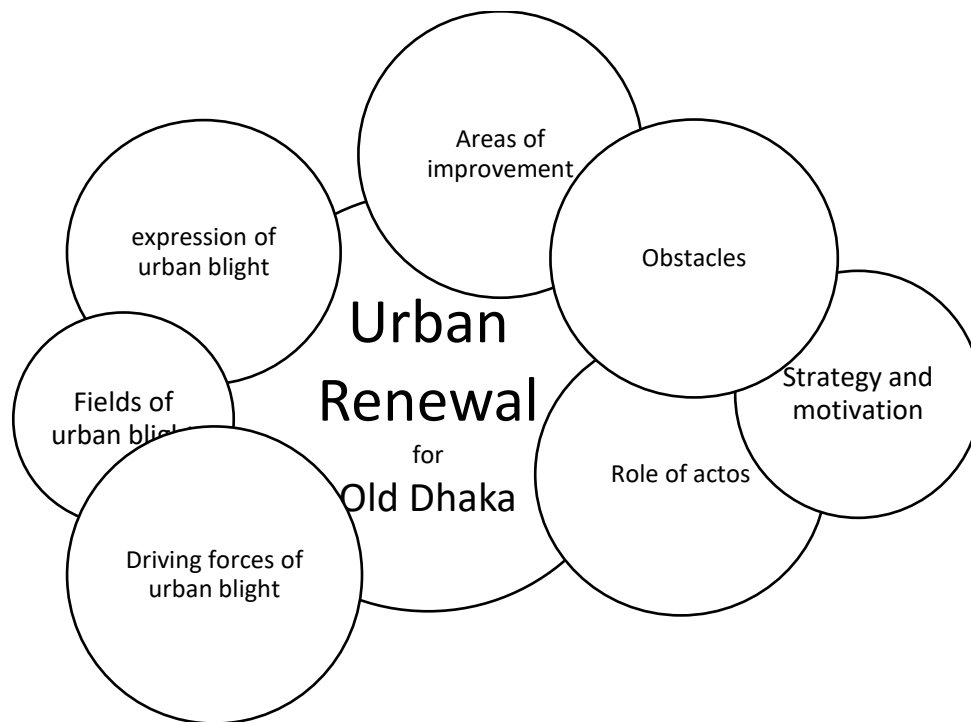


Figure 16: Relevant fields for urban renewal scheme
Source: Author.

4 Chapter 4: Urban Blight Situation in Dhaka

Urban development in the eastern part of south Asia is not an exception from the rest of the region. Political and economic forces have played the most important role in the historical course of development in this region; the Bengal, the undivided Bengal in British India and then the sovereign state Bangladesh. To discuss the urban development of Dhaka, the capital city, it is not possible to discuss just about the city alone. The city must be discussed in the wider regional context and to understand the urban blight situation the regional political history and economic trend must be considered.

This chapter describes the development urban blight in Dhaka with particular interest to Shankhari bazaar. Again it's not always possible to discuss only about Shankhari Bazar or old Dhaka leaving the wider city of Dhaka. Therefore, discussions in this chapter moves back and forth in understanding the urban blight situation of Shankhari Bazar, old Dhaka, city of Dhaka and the South Asian regional context. Attempts are made to make it linear and closer to the mentioned relation, but sometimes discussions are also made in reverse direction. Once more, the driving forces that foster urban blight to set in, as discussed in chapter 3, are not always lone factors, rather many of them are intertwined. Thus, checking all the driving forces gets, sometimes, interrelated and overlapped.

4.1 Historical and natural factors

Uneven geographical development is not only evident in different parts of a city. Uneven development in the regional context leaving some cities in deprivation is nothing new in the capitalist world, as recognized by Harvey (2005) and Amin (1976). Uneven geography is considered as the historical interpretation of the political economic development of a region. In this vein, the city of Dhaka could be discussed in light of historical aspects for deprivation. Moreover, the limited number available researches also put emphasis on several historical factors, for example colonialism, as the source of deprivation.

4.1.1 Geographical and climatic property

Geographical location plays an important role in the development of a city as well as the development of its different parts. Dhaka is surrounded by rivers on three sides and is open only on the north. Thus, it can grow, without any technical imposition on the natural barriers, only on one direction; north. The city lies in a flood plain and it is the only flood free high land surrounded by low lying areas. The geographical location of Dhaka has both positive and negative impacts.

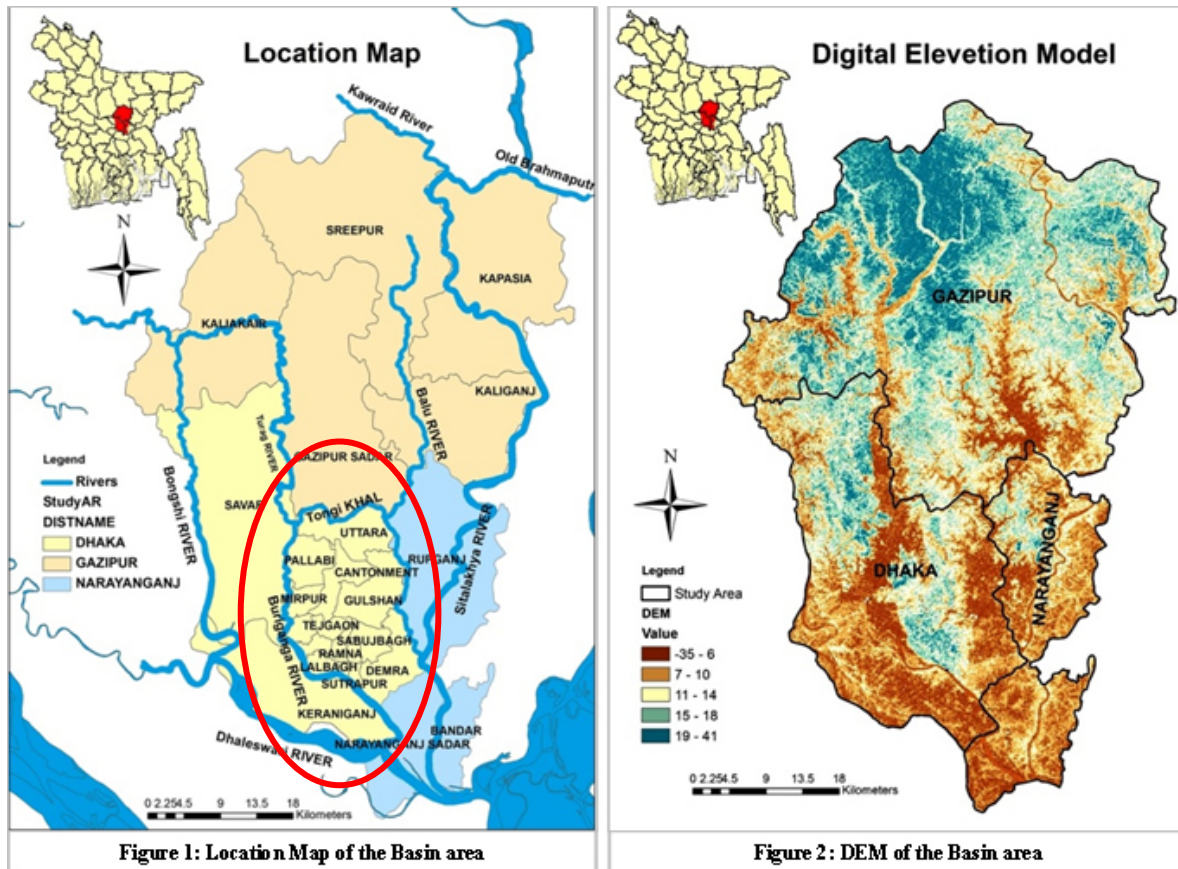


Figure 17: River basin map and DEM of the marked area denotes the Dhaka city area
Source: Basininfo (n.d.).

This natural setting provides Dhaka a natural fortification and makes it difficult for invaders to attack and concur without having a powerful naval force. Though, in the ancient Indian civilization very few royal forces had such a naval force, and this reason helped not only Dhaka but also the entire riverine Bengal to be difficult for invasion. On the other hand, when Bengal was invaded and concurred by the Muslim rulers in 12th century, from the land and not from water, the riverine setting was considered obstacle for the purpose of administration from the central which was typically far away. In 1610 Dhaka was declared the capital of the *Subah* Bengal (Bengal Province) under the Mughal rule, the most powerful Muslim dynasty in pre-colonial India. However, under the Mughal rule Dhaka, despite being a thriving area in business, was considered merely a place of exile or punishment posting (Taufique, 2009; Islam, 2008). This fact is also supported, if architecture is considered as an indicator of development. When compared with, at least, the architecture of other Mughal cities like Delhi or Lahore, Dhaka certainly is an evidence of deprivation. The hot-humid climate and annual flooding events also contribute to the restriction on architecture (Mamoon, 2010). Dhaka remained the provincial capital under the Mughal rule for 200 years, yet it was not considered as permanent living place or even for long term stay for the royal family members or the higher ranking royal officials due to the climatic and geographical reasons. Instead, Dhaka was more important for its commercial prospect

and primarily considered as an administrative center to collect revenue (Islam, 2008). Consequently, urban development was of less importance to the local administrators.

This pattern was also observed in the British colonial rule. The British administrators were not interested to live in Dhaka, probably their unwillingness contributed to the perceived importance of the city in the regional context and in the consideration of urban development (Taufique, 2009).

In the present day situation, geographical conditions put restriction on urban development in several ways. The low-lying areas, which are now part of the city, are subjected to flooding and water clogging very often. The flood protection strategy for the city concentrates to protect the important areas of the city with dikes, flood gates, flood walls etc. and pumping out water from the higher land, and consequently the low-lying areas are sacrificed in the flooding events to keep the more important areas safe (Bala et al., 2009).



Figure 18: (clockwise) Map of existing flood control system in Dhaka showing embankments and location of pumping stations, images of flood waters pumped out at Rampura point (up) and flooded Jantrabari (down) in eastern Dhaka, a very common scenario in monsoon.

Source: Map from (Bala et al., 2009), images (up and down) from Islam et al. (2008) and The Daily Star (2008d).

In Dhaka there have been, at least, two major flooding events, in 1988 and 1998 that affected the city heavily. The 1988 flood interrupted the city in such a scale the policies were adopted and measures taken to keep the vital areas flood free, and at least the western zone was kept under protection, but regrettably the protected west was

flooded again in the 1998 flood (Bala et al., 2009). The eastern zone is still kept unprotected.



Plate 7: Flooded Motijheel (CBD) in 1988 (left) and a flooded road congested with boats in Sabujbagh, an eastern fringe area in the 1998 flood (right).

Source: (Bangladesia), M. A. Taher in World Bank (2015).

For this, living condition is poor and obviously living cost is lower in such neighborhoods; which is why lower income people concentrate in those areas which begets other forms of problems. For example, the neighborhoods in the south and eastern fringe namely Basabo, Sabujbagh, Kadamtala, Rajarbagh, Jurain, Badda, Rampura etc. are deprived neighborhoods in the city. Besides low lying areas, there are some other localities in the city are subjected to chronic waterlogging due to problems in the drainage management. For example, waterlogging in Shantinagar or the DND triangle can be mentioned here.

Shankhari Bazar and the old Dhaka area is located in the western area and is protected from the river by the flood wall and usually remains flood free in the monsoon. But in case of heavy rainfall, waterlogging takes place very often in some parts of the old city, and the narrow flooded roads make life difficult in the monsoon, as exemplified in The Daily Star (2008d).



Plate 8: Narrow roads of old Dhaka get flooded following heavy shower in the monsoon, 2017.

Source: The Daily Star (2008d).

4.1.2 Natural resources

The region of Bengal is rich in agricultural resources, such as fertile soil, livestock fisheries etc., but not in mineral resources. Therefore, the economy of this region has

always been based on agriculture and very limited scale of agrarian industry and not inorganic industry, which is reasonable. Industrial activities are very limited and agrarian in nature, if not craftwork based. This natural recourse is exploited to the greatest extent by the colonial rulers.

Islam (2008) mentions that Dhaka, in the course of history, has always been important in business and the city's fate is linked with the business which is based on agricultural products and craftwork; crops and textile are considered the main business. He also mentions that Dhaka was heading towards being a capitalist metropolis what was interrupted by the industrial revolution in Britain. The agricultural quality was utilized to feed the industrial revolution. Cash cropping, mainly jute, indigo and tea, was introduced and widely practiced. But this agro-based business did not help the economy of Dhaka. The benefit of cash cropping bestowed the growth of Kolkata as a metropolis and to lesser extent Narayanganj and Barisal as port city.

With the shift of capital to Murshidabad from Dhaka, in the Mughal period, the business and banking elites also moved to Murshidabad and the city's income declined. (Islam, 2008; Mamoon, 2010). However, it was always the business elites who were benefited from the agro-based business, not the produces. Therefore, with the movement of businessmen, business declined but Dhaka was not totally diminished, rather survived and its subsistence owes to the agricultural base.

4.1.3 Political importance and status in the wider region

Nilufar (1994) has shown that in last four decades the city has changed along with the political and economic change. However, this is also true throughout the history of Bengal. This is more clearly evident during the Mughal and colonial rule. Due to the importance in business, the city of Dhaka had always some association with regional political atmosphere. And the political power was linked with the business. Thus, with the rise or fall of the political power, the fate of the city was directly linked.

Though Dhaka was an urban settlement starting from the 7th century, it rose to the pick as an urban center when it was declared as the provincial capital of Bengal in the Mughal rule. It remained as capital for 200 years. Despite being the capital, Dhaka did not receive due importance if compared to the other major cities in the region. When the capital was shifted to Murshidabad, Dhaka started to decline. However, Dhaka suffered but was not wiped off totally owing to the elementary dependence on agriculture.

After the British occupation of Bengal, Kolkata started to gain political, consequent, economic as well as administrative importance. Eventually Kolkata was established the capital of British India and Dhaka, the former provincial capital city, remained merely more than a district headquarter (Islam, 1996b).

However, still Dhaka was the main urban center in the East Bengal region and the city was used primarily for revenue collection, while the revenue was mostly spent in Kolkata (Mamoon, 2010; Mamoon, 1993; Islam, 2008). Mamoon (2010) has shown that following the Zamindar¹³ system, the entire eastern Bengal was utilized to generate revenue from agricultural production and the Zamindars spent the income in the city of Kolkata. Who could not avail Kolkata, Dhaka was the substitute. It can be said that Dhaka served as a distant suburb of Kolkata.

Dhaka received importance again in 1905 on the occasion of Partition of Bengal ¹⁴, as it was declared the capital of newly established East Bengal and Assam province. Then Dhaka received investment on infrastructures to house the government buildings. However, this physical development was directed in the direction opposite to the established old urban core leaving it in deprivation. In response to a very strong political movement in Kolkata, in 1911 the Partition of Bengal was annulled, and Dhaka lost the importance along with the status of provincial capital. As a compensation, Dhaka university was established. But Dhaka lost the importance once more and the increasing pace of development was halted. In 1917 the first attempt to develop the city according to a plan was taken. The first master plan of Dhaka was prepared. unfortunately, the plan was not executed.

Following the Partition of India in 1947, two independent dominions, India and Pakistan was created on the two-nation theory¹⁵. And Pakistan again was divided into

¹³ Zamindar is a Persian word that means land owner. In the Indian subcontinent, it implies to an aristocrat land lord. Usually Zamindars hereditarily owned vast land and control over their peasants, from whom they reserved the right to collect tax on behalf of the royal court. during the British colonial rule, the permanent settlement system was made popularly known as zamindari system. This system was abolished during land reforms in East Bengal (Bangladesh) in 1950, India in 1951 and West Pakistan in 1959.

¹⁴ During the British colonial rule in 1905, the undivided Bengal, that comprises present day Bangladesh and West Bengal of India, was declared to be divided into two provinces, namely Bengal (comprising western Bengal as well as the province of Bihar and Orissa with Kolkata as capital) and Eastern Bengal and Assam (comprising eastern Bengal and the province of Assam with Dhaka as the capital) showing the reason to achieve administrative efficiency. This is known as the Partition of Bengal. This declaration caused a huge political turmoil. Hindus were outraged at what they recognized as a "divide and rule" policy while the Muslims generally supported this partition on the ground that this partition will diminish the dominance of Hindu aristocrats, elites and businessmen over the poor condition of the Muslim population in the eastern zone. The partition animated the Hindus and led the Muslims to form their own national organization on communal basis. Finally, in 1911, the partition was annulled and the two parts of Bengal were reunited. A new partition was declared on linguistic, rather than religious grounds, and a total of three provinces were formed, namely Bengal Province, Bihar and Orissa Province to the west, and Assam Province to the east. The huge political turmoil on this issue moved the British Government to shift the administrative capital of British India from Kolkata to New Delhi as well.

¹⁵ The core idea of the two-nation theory is the notion that the primary identity and unifying denominator of Muslims in the South Asian subcontinent is their religion, rather than language or ethnicity. And thus, Indian Hindus and Muslims are two distinct nations, regardless of ethnic or other commonalities. This two-nation theory was the key principle of Pakistan movement and partition of India. Poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal first addressed the philosophical exposition of this

West Pakistan and East Pakistan, 1600 kilometers apart where lies India. Dhaka became capital, once again, of East Pakistan. This time, Dhaka received importance more than before and there were attempts to make planned urban development. In 1956 an official body named 'Dhaka Improvement Trust' (DIT) was established to take care of the city's physical development. However, in the 24 years of Pakistan rule, East Pakistan was treated as a colony and Dhaka served all the purposes as a colonial city, leaving few areas in the city in deprivation.

In 1971, the nation state Bangladesh was born and for the first time in history Dhaka became the capital of a sovereign state. Consequently, the city achieved political importance in the regional context more than ever before. Probably the city as it is today would never have been materialized devoid of independent Bangladesh.

4.1.4 Colonial rule

The Indian subcontinent was under British colonial rule for almost 2 centuries, from 1757 to 1947. But if a colony is considered as a territory ruled over by people who are not native, then it can be said that the Indian subcontinent went under colonial rule with the Muslim invasion. Particularly, the Bengal region had faced colonial rule starting from the 12th century.

Prior to the Mughal rule, Dhaka was probably not a city under royal rule, whether native or foreign origin. It was an urban settlement with some business importance. In 1610 when, Dhaka became the provincial capital, the manifestation of a colonial city started to be evident. The true nature of a colonial city was observed in Dhaka under the British colonial rule (1757-1947) to some extent and in the Pakistan rule 1947-1971) to the full extent. Colonial rule has contributed to urban blight in the following ways.

Colonial interest for development

The primary function of a colonial settlement is to produce commercial surplus for the colonist and serve as a market for the products of the colonist (Hamilton, 1948). Therefore, the issues of development for the local people are usually given least priority. This development attitude does not protect the interest of the local population in the city rather hinders it. Thus, colonial cities are merely extended hinterland for resource collocation (Leonard, 1986; Tunas, 2008).

Dhaka, beside, served as a collection point of revenue and urban center for the agrarian economy of the region in the Mughal and British period. In the Pakistan period, it served

theory and afterwards Muhammad Ali Jinnah translated it into the political reality of a nation-state, named Pakistan.

again, in a more comprehensive way, as the central point to collect revenue and recourses from the entire East Pakistan to be channeled to West Pakistan (Taufique, 2009; Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991).

Colonial strategy of urban development

To fulfill the purpose of colonialism, the colony has to be structured with certain degree of development (Yeoh, 2003). Urban development, thus, provided in the colonial city is only to serve the purpose of resource extraction and other assigned and purposefully limited activities like bureaucracy, internal/external defense etc. Simultaneously, urban planning, being a political instrument, is a way to demonstrate and express the colonial attitude, to install the idea of *mission civilisatrice* or civilizing the inferior race (Njoh, 2006, as cited in Choudhury et al.,2013).

This colonial mentality is easily expressed in policies to provide segregation between the colonists and the colonized population. This is reflected in the urban development pattern of colonial cities with generously served, even often built according to the garden city principle, urban settlements for the colonists; while, there are settlement for the native people neglected, poorly served or without any urban service at all. Such urban divide is widely used in this region as a tool for the colonial administration to promote spatial, socio-cultural and economic segregation (Tunas, 2008). This segregation is not only between the colony and colonist, but also to create and promote a subordinate population. A better urban living is used as reward for this segment of subordinate population. This trend is clearly evident in Dhaka.

In Mughal Dhaka, the royal families did not live here. Higher ranking officials developed the fort area for themselves and a few other areas for other propose. In Mughal culture, none but the royal blood was allowed to build permanent structures, which had made Dhaka devoid of the magnificent Mughal architectures. The Mughals are famous as mighty builders, yet compared to other Mughal cities Dhaka, despite being a provincial capital city, is poorly enriched in architecture. And the Mughals also provided less attention for the pre Mughal part of the city and they continued development away from the old Dhaka making a new Dhaka (Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991).

In the British Dhaka, the trend of urban development is observed to keep a distance from the native population. This was achieved by developing new areas away from the established urban areas and providing large amount of green areas creating a buffer. Some examples can be mentioned, some areas were developed for the European population received necessary urban services such as Ramna (residential and recreational area mainly for the British officers and later for highest ranked civil officers) and Armanitola (an area with concentration of Armenian population), while some other areas, such as Gendariya, Narinda, Wari etc. also received urban development

but to a lesser extent and these areas were developed for administrative officers and local elites as a reward for their service and obedience, which is a widely practiced colonial policy (Mamoon, 1993; Rahman, 2011). Generally, the city's administrators, except only a few, showed least interest in the development of old urban areas like Tanti Bazar, Dolaikhal, Lalbagh etc. (Mamoon, 1993). The old Dhaka and new Dhaka as we find today was established in the latter half of British rule. The following images published in public domains (such as Wikimedia Commons) and by The British Library and the old city core and the newly developed areas for the colonists in British Dhaka.



Plate 9: Ramna area, British Officers Mess in 1934 (left) and Race Course in 1890 (right)
Source: The British Library.

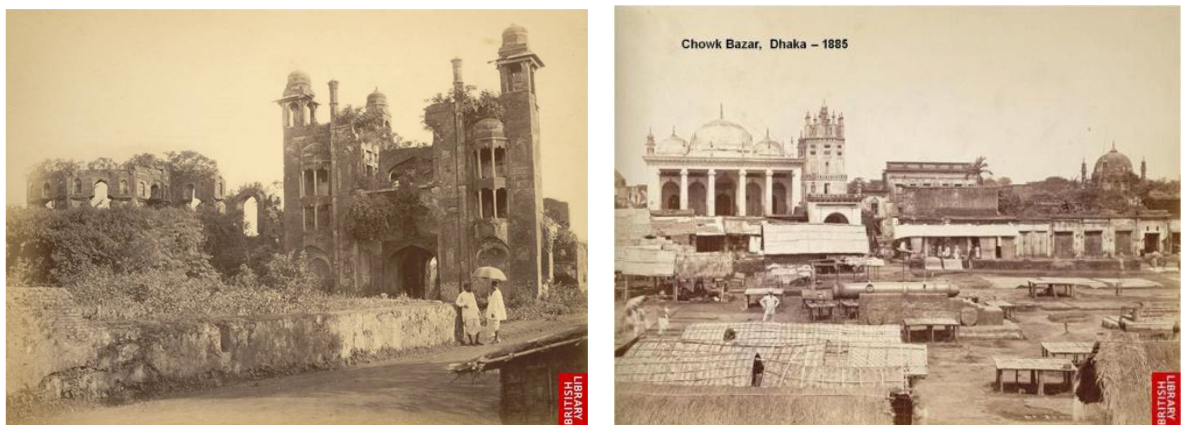


Plate 10: Lalbagh Fort in 1872 (left) and Chowk Bazar in 1885 (right)
Source: The British Library.

In the early 20th century, the first ever planning attempt was taken in 1917, after the annulment of Bengal Partition in 1911. This first attempt was a 22page document by British planner Patrick Geddes. Geddes envisaged Dhaka with parks and canals following the garden city concept and he divided Dhaka into zones with an outline for development of the old town area and colonial offices and residential buildings around Ramna Green (Shafi, 2010). However, Choudhury et al. (2013) argue that Geddes was inspired by the waterbodies and greenery of Dhaka and his vision was mostly rhetorical, utopian and firmly planted in the western tradition. Choudhury et al. (2013) also

recognize that albeit Geddes emphasized the need for comprehensive town planning, but for Hayder (1994), his suggestions were sketchy, informal and lacking details and was never met with formal recognition (as cited in Choudhury et al, 2013). Geddes's guidelines are strongly evident to be followed in the Dhaka University Area with beautiful roads and green areas (Hayder, 1994, as cited in Kabir and Parolin, 2012).

In the Pakistan period, the colonial legacy was continued. Discrimination between East and West Pakistan was almost all the sectors of development. It also reflected, to some extent, in the city's spatial structure. Urban settlements were developed specifically for those in the public service, in particular preferences were made to serve those in the military service and from West Pakistan; as bureaucracy and army became the symbol of Western domination over the East (Islam, 1981, as cited in Choudhury et al., 2013).

In a planned way, spatial discrimination between elites and common people was created and continued in a colonial manner. For example, Ramna retained the past glory of aristocracy, Dhanmondi, one of the most expensive prestigious area today, was acquired from the local presents and developed with all necessary urban services for the elite people in the late 50s while Azimpur was designated for government employees, Mirpur and Mohammadpur were primarily designated for non-Bengali refugees along with common people with scheme to provide basic housing (Mowla, 2007; Kabir and Parolin, 2012; Islam, 1996a; Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991). The trend was to develop and plan for new areas, mainly for high class residential purpose such as Gulshan in 1961, Banani in 1964, Uttara in 1965, plan for Baridhara in 1962 and other uses such as Motijheel as CBD and Tejgaon for industrial activities in 1950s (Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991). This There is little evidence that development of old established areas and development of deprived people received priority. This trend of is clearly showed in a land use map by Taufique (2009) which is labeled as follows.

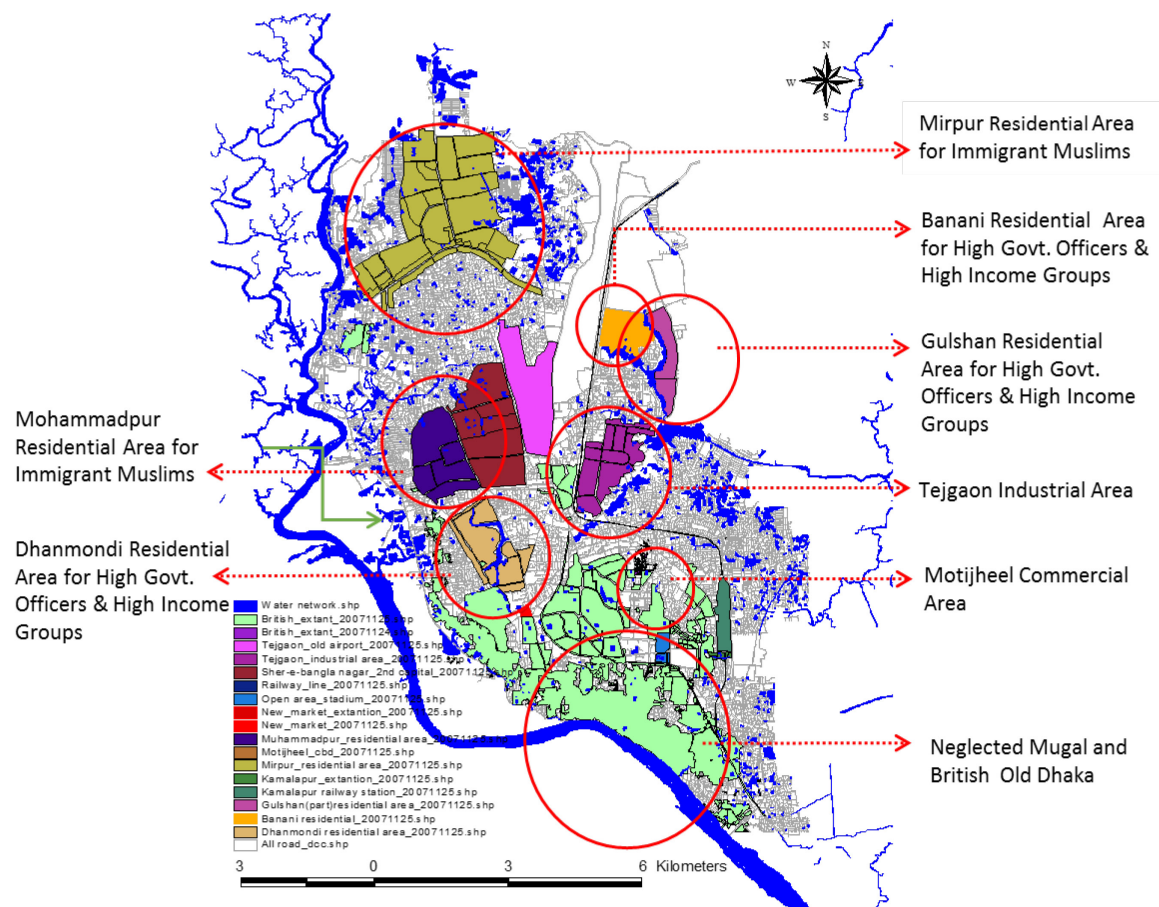


Figure 19: Planned land use of Dhaka in the Pakistan period

Source: Modified from Taufique (2009).

As a city, Dhaka received less importance for development than the Western cities, Karachi for example, although being the second capital of Pakistan and the main city of the territory with 55% population of Pakistan, a true colonial pattern, which can be exemplified by the following images.

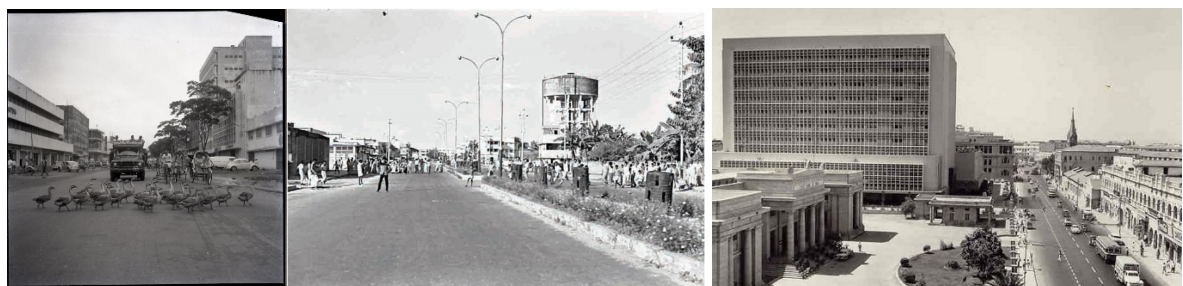


Plate 11: Motijheel area, CBD of Dhaka in 1960 (left), Fakirapul in Motijheel area in 1970s (middle) and the Chundrigar Road, CBD of Karachi in 1962 (right)

Source: (from left to right) Photo credit: Rashid Talukder, Sharmin (2013) and Paracha (2014).

In the Pakistan period institutional framework for planning was established. In 1948, the East Pakistan Planning Sub-Committee prepared a physical plan for Dhaka with functional zoning, although it is criticized for lacking any formal background studies (Kabir and Parolin, 2012). The 'Dhaka Improvement Trust' (DIT) was established in

1956 under the provision of the 'Town Improvement Act -1953' (TI Act 1953). The first comprehensive master plan for Dhaka was prepared in 1959. This planning document, titled as the Dacca Master Plan, 1959 was prepared by three British planners Mioprio, Spencely and Macfarlane. This plan is also criticized for underestimating the potential of Dhaka and considering it merely as a colonial city (Kabir and Parolin, 2012; Choudhury et al., 2013). Yet, the Dhaka as seen today was laid by this plan.

Colonial importance of strategic geographical location

Geographical location is a curtail factor for the development of a colonial city. Due to strategic geographical location, some cities received enough investment. If compared to Singapore, Jakarta or Mumbai, the locational disadvantage of Dhaka makes it clear. All three mentioned colonial cities were developed to a great extent under the British colonial rule because of their locational advantage (Kosambi and Brush, 1988; Tunas, 2008). Also locational importance in the wider region matters and it appears that in the South Asian context Dhaka offers lesser potential for locational advantage compared to other cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai (Madras), Karachi etc.

Colonial economic policy

To fulfill the colonial production purpose, the local production in the colony is destroyed or minimized to the subsistence level for the native population and the colony is structured with given economic activities only to ensure colonial extraction (Yeoh, 2003). Castells (1977) argues that industrialization takes place in the metropolitan core of colonial power, and in the colony, the industrial development is only an extended part of that. On the other hand, a colony also must serve as a market for the industrial production of the metropolitan core. Thus, in a colony urbanization takes place without real industrialization and the industrial development is only to process the raw materials for the industries in the metropolitan core.

Islam (2008) recognizes that the Company rule (The East India Company regime), adversely affected the economy of Bengal as well as Dhaka. The 18th century manufacturing and trading society of Dhaka declined when the control of this region was passed on to the East India Company. Only the textile industry survived but disappeared in the face of British industrial revolution. He also recognizes that introduction of cash cropping instead of food grains, jute and indigo in particular, in the British period had a profound impact on the Bengal region; the new business did not benefit the regional or city economy.

The structured industrialization for processing of the agricultural products in the colony took place mainly in Kolkata, for example the jute mills lined along the river Hugli for the jute industry in Dundee (Worldjute.com, n.d.).



Figure 20: Jute Mills concentrated on both sides of Hoogly river in 1894 (left) and jute industry in Dundee and export of raw jute from the Indian sub-continent.

Source: Worldjute.com (n.d.).

Interestingly, although east Bengal produced the jute but the industries were in Kolkata. Later the jute trade contributed to the rise of Narayanganj and some other bazars but not Dhaka. Moreover, to support the textile industry in Britain, the textile business in Dhaka was destroyed purposefully. Eventually the colony was made the market for the British textile production, and Dhaka was the distribution center in the eastern region.

Similar trend is evident in the Pakistan period. Economic disparity between East and West Pakistan is well established in a number of researches. Here some simple facts are mentioned from a literature (Gull, 2015) from Pakistan (the former West Pakistan). Gull (2015) mentions that East Pakistan's export, which was jute, was the main source of foreign exchange which was used for the imports of consumer goods and industrial machinery in West Pakistan. Expenditure ratio between the East and West remained from 20:80 to a maximum of 36:64. The economic policies in the 50s and 60s were developed to benefit West Pakistan industrial development and consumers market at the cost of East Pakistan's agricultural products, primarily jute. Again, the region was forced to serve as a market for the production of the west. Undoubtedly Dhaka was the urban center for revenue collection and product distribution, not more than that.

Colonial interest of socio-cultural change

In colonial policy, social infrastructure is a key issue, as describes in (Tunas, 2008). It is important to increase the population in the colony, in the same time it also created risk for it generates tension, conflict and resistance (Arruda and Brasil, 1980, as cited in Tunas, 2008). Therefore, a particular modification on the social setting needs to be essentially established to ensure the continuity of colonial exploitation. This modified social setting is particularly important to avoid social unrest or revolts in the colony that would only put the process of production into halt. Thus, an elite group is supported to serve as agent in the form of ally and a subordinate group is supported to serve as

reserve army; which consequently initiates social segregation and exclusion (King, 1976; Tunas, 2008).

British colonist adapted the Roman concept of *Divide et Impera* or to divide and rule in India like in many other colonial territories. These types of policies often lead to an institutionalized socio-cultural fragmentation that persists until the modern day. The divide and rule policy manifested in different ways, the most significant were introduction of communal politics, cultural duality and spatial segregation. Moreover social infrastructures were purposefully designed and maneuvered to increase social and cultural segregation. These issues most often are manifested in the spatial formation of the colonial city.

In Dhaka, the role of communal and cultural politics has a deep influence over the spatial expression. Deprivation, stigmatization and purposeful urban development of different neighborhoods are in existence for centuries. The genesis of the communal politics is difficult to identify, however, undoubtedly it is nourished in the British colonial regime and gained maturity in the Pakistan period.

Colonial strategy of demography

Colonial rule has an impact on the population structure of a colonial city. It is necessary to increase the population for production purpose, and in areas not important for colonial production population is not a concern.

In Mughal rule, Dhaka thrived, but when the administration disfavored Dhaka as a capital, there was a decline in population. During the Company Rule, Dhaka suffered most the population declined considerably. In the later stage of British rule, Dhaka received a rise in population. In the Pakistan period, there was a sudden influx in the population growth; a major portion was from rural urban migration which is still the vital cause of population increase in the city. This time, there was more population in the city than the city could serve. The city authorities could not calculate the rate of increase in their planning and the plans were becoming outdated soon. The living condition in the city started to decline, which was more prominent in some neighborhoods.

4.2 Socio-economic factors

Besides some historical factors, a number of social and economic aspects contribute to deprivation of city and its different neighborhoods. It is observed that, changes in such factors have taken place comparatively in recent time and in most cases after the independence. The most important factors are as follows.

4.2.1 Demographic change

Population in Dhaka started to rise slowly and at a steady rate from the later period of the British rule. After the partition in 1947, there was a considerable change in the demographic structure of the city. On one hand, the ethnic composition was changed, a considerable number of Hindu population left Dhaka and Muslim population migrated to Dhaka. This change took place in a concentered form in the inner city area. This change in the population structure had profound influence in the social-cultural life and in the property ownership pattern in the inner city and these changes eventually contributed to set urban blight in some neighborhoods. On the other hand, as Dhaka was the center of everything, people from all the corners of the country started to migrate to Dhaka which bolstered the natural growth rate of the city.

In 1956, DIT was established as the responsible agency to take care of the physical development of the city. DIT prepared a master plan for Dhaka in 1959 for an area of 220 square miles and for a 20-year span, 1958-1978. Kabir and Parolin (2012) inform that the plan considered a total increase of 40% with a rate of 1.75% per annum and expected that the population will increase from 575,000 to 816,000 in the main city and from 1,035,000 to 1,466,000 in the conurbations. However, by 1980 the megacity population was estimate to be 3.26 million, more than two times of the master plan's estimation (U N, 2003). Congestion in the inner city was a recognized problem in the 1959 master plan, though the trend was to develop new areas with low density.

With the independence in 1971, the city received not only the status of capital, as well as the unimaginable population influx unprecedented in the history. Of course rural-urban migration is again the primary source of the increase. The most obvious expression of the population increase is the mushrooming of slum and poor neighborhoods scattered in the city. The service providing authorities could not keep pace with the population increase, and the quality and quantity of urban services started to deteriorate in some neighborhoods. There are simply too many people that can be accommodated properly with the available resources.

At present, Dhaka is one of the fastest growing city in the world. The city population now counts for 16.98 million, it is the 11th largest city in the world and growing at a rate of 3.6% per annum and expected to be the 6th largest by 2030 (U N, 2014). The immense growth rate has been slightly reduced recently years compared to the estimations in last decade, yet it is a huge growing urban agglomeration. A major portion of the population influx results from rural-urban migration. The metropolitan area is just 360 square kilometers which makes the population density of with a density of 23,234 people per square kilometer (World Population Review, 2017). Population is now considered the single most crucial factor that leads to all the problems in the city, not only urban blight.

The population is not evenly distributed in the city. The inner city area is the most densely populated area and concentration is increasing, as shown in the following figures from Taufique (2009) and Khatun et al. (2015). The inner city again is the first choice of the rural migrants from the first day due to economic and social reasons. Densely populated areas are vulnerable to the risk of urban blight to set. It is observed that, the densely populated areas are usually under blighted condition.

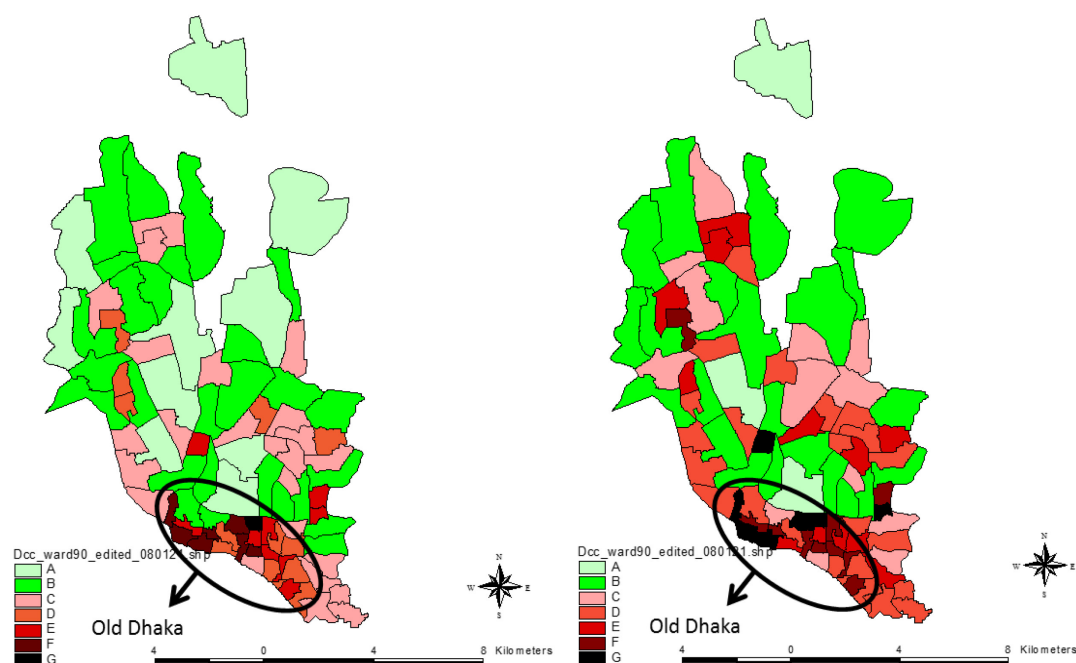


Figure 21: Dhaka ward wise population density in 2001(left) and in 2005 (right) showing concentration of congestion in old Dhaka

Source: Taufique (2009).

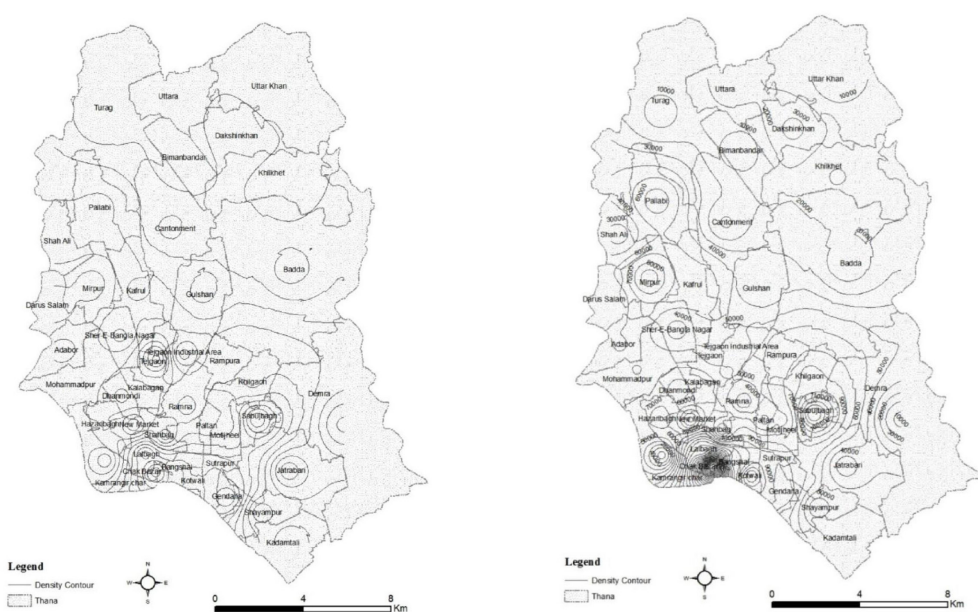


Figure 22: Contour map representing population density in Dhaka Metropolitan Area in 2001(left) and 2011(right). Concentration in the old Dhaka is clearly visible.

Source: Khatun et al. (2015).

Overpopulation also begets overcrowding of built environment, over use of urban services and social problems which eventually contributes to the law and order situation. Increase in the number of migrants raises the lack of belongingness of the residents to the neighborhood.

4.2.2 Urban poverty

Poverty is a recognized factor that contributes to urban blight. Poverty is the factor that invites a lot of other factors responsible for urban blight and reinforces all of them. In Dhaka, at least 28% of the population are poor and 36% of the population are living in the slums (CUS et al., 2006). Slums are directly associated with poverty and undoubtedly expression of urban blight.

The phenomenon of slums and squatters in Dhaka is, perhaps, as old as the city itself. But the city has experienced a prolific growth of slums and squatters since the independence of the country in 1971. CUS et al. (2006) has done a study on the urban slums of the country, the study informs that by the end of 1976, only 10 slums existed with a population of 10,000. The number increased to 3007 settlements with a population of 1.1 million in 1996. About 90% of the total number of slums and squatter settlements has developed in the last three decades. The highest concentration of growth (45%) took place between 1981 and 1990. Slums and squatter settlements are not distributed uniformly throughout the Dhaka Metropolitan area but rather they are concentrated mostly on the fringes of the city. Due to an acute demand for land and high land prices, especially in the central zones and in upper class residential areas, the slums and squatter communities have moved or are moving towards the city's peripheries in the search for cheap shelter. Slum and squatter settlements did not develop in the central part of the city like Mothijheel, Kotoali, Sutrapur or Lalbagh in the last decade. They mostly developed in the peripheral areas of Mirpur, Mohammadpur and Demra.

Other than the slum areas, a considerable number of neighborhoods are poor. A poor area here stands for an area where the residents have low income. It does not necessarily mean that it has no income generation activities. Often poor areas have considerable amount of income generating activities. Problems in a poor area are directly related to the low earning of the residents and their inability to pay for the services. Ironically, the residents in a poor area very often pay more, than the affluent residents, for urban services. Poverty endows a stigma that puts obstacles for public investment in the area, but not a social stigma. Poverty is evident in the inner city, in the fringes, as well as in most parts of the city. A person is considered poor if he lives in any of the areas recognized as poor area, however he is not socially discriminated because of his area of residence whether the area is under blight or not.

The city of Dhaka is the capital of a poor country. Therefore, poverty is obviously a very general characteristic of the city and not confined to some specific settlements like slums (Islam and Shafi, 2004). Except for few neighborhoods, poverty is scattered, and it can be said that more or less evenly distributed, over the city and most of the neighborhoods that are poor are also deprived. Thus, poverty does not manifest itself as a special reason to pave the way for urban blight.

4.2.3 Property ownership

Property ownership is critical in nature and crucial in terms of its multifaceted implication in Bangladesh, just like other countries in South Asia. Unsolved property ownership can be grouped under three categories; firstly, unclear inheritance, secondly, absentee ownership in the form of vested property as well as ownership dispute due to 1947 partition, and thirdly, illegal occupation. All kinds of problems are evident in the city. According to urban professionals and those who work in the field of property related problems, in the old city core area unclear inheritance and vested property are dominant problems where illegal occupation is more prevalent in other parts of the city, particularly in the fringe areas.

All the forms of unsolved property ownership result, in general, a dispute over the responsibility to investment and maintenance and the outcome is the poor condition of property as well as living environment inside and overcrowding. In addition, if there is any proposal, from whatever agency, that involves more than a single parcel of land and if there is at least one parcel with dispute, that can, and usually does, jeopardize the whole effort. It can be done either by non-participation or disagreement, in extreme case, the unwilling owner can easily get a legal stay order on the effort until there is an agreement and then the legal procedure may take years to settle. On the other hand, urban services, which are provided by public agencies, are rarely provided to properties with disputed ownership. The reason is, then urban services, for example gas supply, are provided to a property this is considered to be a legal acceptance of the user's right on that specific property. A very good example is squatter settlements without legal supply of water or electricity.

Problems related to inheritance

Formalization of private property ownership was, perhaps first, introduced by the British (Rahman, 2008). Before the British rule, there were some scattered efforts for records for property and governance for the urban areas in the Mughal period (Rahman, 2008), however private property ownership was, as it is believed at present, informal and more communal in nature rather than individual. Property is inherited by the family members from the ancestors. Distribution of property is determined by the religious regulations. Traditionally, the children inherit the property of their father when he dies. It is requiring

by the land administration system to issue proper documentation that the children are in possession of the property. This documentation process costs a lot of money in the form of property transfer tax, which is a certain percent of the property value, and other charges. In addition to the official cost, there is always some other unofficial cost, in a simple world bribe, which must be paid to the persons in the land registration office otherwise no procedure can be done. This corruption in the land registration office is so well recognized and established that no one even thinks that any work can be done in the land registration office without any bribe. Hence, people are not interested to make proper documentation of the property inheritance. Moreover, due to religious regulations of property sharing, many problematic claims arise within the family. It is not the case that without proper documents, someone is restricted to utilize and enjoy the property. Another important fact is whether the land tax is being paid, and it can be paid even in the name of someone who died. Therefore, it is not an emergency to register the property. Therefore, various reasons, of which saving the property transfer tax and bribe money is the most important, discourage the residents to go for proper documentation. And when this goes for generations and the family tree is wide and complicated then the ownership gets very much complicated.

Ownership dispute due to Partition in 1947

The Partition in 1947 was followed by a mass exodus of religious minority in different areas in the subcontinent. Muslim population migrated to the city of Dhaka as well in other parts of East Pakistan, on the other hand Hindu population, again from Dhaka and other parts of East Pakistan, migrated to India. In the urban areas, particularly in the present old Dhaka, this migration resulted in chaotic situation in the field of property ownership. The major portion of the property in the old Dhaka area, which was the city proper during the time of partition, were owned by hind population. And due to partition a considerable amount property were left abandoned. There was an option of property swap between Hindu and Muslim families who migrated. Some people had sold their property before they left. In addition, when muslim population migrated, known as Mohajer, the government allotted properties among them on lease or in other forms and the government also acquired abandoned properties to use for official purpose. And of course there was illegal occupation by the migrated Muslim population of the abandoned properties.

However, it cannot be said that all the events of property swap were accurate and legally correct. According to historians and researchers on Dhaka, those who claim their property as a result of property swap are not always telling the truth. It is also mentioned by the residents of old Dhaka that, after the partition, majority of the abandoned Hindu properties, most of the which are on the business areas of Nwabpur Road, Jonson Road, Farashganj, Bongram etc., were illegally occupied by local Muslims

and some portion by migrated Muslims. The volume of property that were swapped or leased properly is very negligible. Understandably, there is lack of proper documentation of the property and in many cases forged documents are prepared with the help of corrupted land registration system.

Change in the ownership brought change in the land use and also affected the belongingness to the neighborhood which helped to deteriorate the residential quality. For example, the case of famous Ruplal House in Farashganj, which was a renowned residential and business area, as described by Siddique (2013b). Currently, several cases by different people trying to claim the ownership of the house have been on in the High court and lower court for the ownership of Ruplal House that was built by Ruplal Das in the 19th century. His grandsons lived in the house until they left the country in 1961 when Ibrahim Jamal had the house through property swap and renamed it as 'Jamal House'; and once again Jamal's family left the country during the liberation war in 1971 transferring the power of attorney to someone named Ragib Ali. In course of time a lot of change took place in the ownership and still there are many, and at present day, the palace is being used as a warehouse of spices even after the government declared the building as a national archaeological site in 1989. The entire area of Farashganj has lost the residential quality and is a blighted area at present.



Plate 12: Riverside and entrance view of Ruplal House in the late 19th century (upper row) and in 2013 as a warehouse for spices and encroached courtyard inside the palace (lower row).

Source: upper row from DhakaDailyPhoto (2006) and lower row from (Siddique, 2013a).

This pattern of change did not take place overnight after the partition. It continued from 1947 to 1965 until the Indo-Pak war and the declaration of the infamous Enemy Property.

Vested property

The Vested Property Act in Bangladesh is an infamous law that has long been criticized as a major source of insecurity and violation of human rights of the Hindu minorities. This law originated in the Pakistan rule when it was known as Enemy Property and it allowed the Government to confiscate property from individuals it deemed as an enemy of the state (Khan, 2009). To understand the complexity of this issue it is necessary to have some idea about the evolution and sociopolitical setting that enabled the law.

Prof. Barkat and his team have completed a very detail research, in 2000, on the multifaceted implication of the Vested Property Act on the Hindu community in Bangladesh. Barkat et al. (2000) considers this act as an instrument by the Pakistani rulers with a simple purpose, reduction of the number of Bengali speaking population of Pakistan by driving out a considerable number of Bengali Hindu population who were one third of east Bengal.

Khan (2009) have summarized a brief course of evolution of this act. On September 6, 1965, at the outbreak of war with India, Pakistan proclaimed a state of emergency under the Defence of Pakistan Ordinance. On the same day, Central Government of Pakistan promulgated the Defence of Pakistan Rules under which the Governor of East Pakistan passed an order directed against the Hindu minority. By this order, the property of the Hindu minorities, who had temporarily fled to India in fear of their lives, was declared 'Enemy Property' and the state was enabled to take their property into custody with the rationale that a Hindu who went to India was an enemy. This order was used as an instrument for appropriating land belonging to those Hindus accused of supporting India. With the emergence of Bangladesh, the law remained in force by virtue of the Laws Continuance Enforcement Order 1971. Although renamed as the Vested Property Act in 1974, but it retained the ability to declare a Bangladeshi citizen as an enemy of the state and confiscate his property. There had been a series of ordinances, amendments, circulars etc. on this issue. The major ones are as follows.

- The East Bengal (Emergency) Requisition of Property Act (XIII of 1948)
- The Defence of Pakistan Ordinance (No. XXIII of 6 September, 1965)
- The Defence of Pakistan Rules of 1965
- The Enemy Property (Custody and Registration) Order of 1965
- The East Pakistan Enemy Property (Lands and Buildings Administration and Disposal) Order of 1966
- Bangladesh (Vesting of Property and Assets) President's (Order No. 29 of 1972)
- The Vested and Non-Resident Property (Administration) Act (XLVI of 1974)

Ever since the promulgation, this law has continued to deprive the Hindu minorities in various ways through direct and indirect application as well as widespread abuse of the law. Being a favorite and effective tool for land grabbers, frequently the case is that Hindu families who had one or several members leaving the country for economic as well as political reasons, had their entire property confiscated and/or grabbed due to labeling as enemy (Khan, 2009).

The major impacts are observed in loss of Hindu population, change in the property and land ownership pattern, devaluation of Hindu land property, violence of varying degree including death, social exclusion etc. (Barkat, 2000b; Barkat, 2000a; Zaman et al., 2000a; Zaman et al., 2000b)

Albeit major portion of total incidents of dispossession took place in the Pakistan regime, it is also true that the trend continued in independent Bangladesh and in the first three decades there has been simply empty promises to repeal the act but no tangible action had been taken (Barkat and Zaman, 2000). Finally, in 2001, The Vested Properties Return Act (2001) was enabled to return the property to the original owners. However almost nothing has been done in reality. Latest, there have been few amendments in 2012 and some efforts has been taken to at least identify the properties that falls under this category.

The implication of vested property is more profound in the rural settings, as shown by Prof. Barkat and his team, as a huge portion of agricultural land is confiscated and grabbed under this law. In urban area, it is more with the homestead property and not vast amount of land. There two types of vested property, property under government possession and/or leased to other parties (person or institution) by the government and property outside the government possession and possessed by other parties. In the old Dhaka area, a considerable amount of property is confiscated or grabbed by using and misusing the Vested Property law. Due to the misuse of the law, people are not willing to talk about the vested property issue. Therefor it is very difficult to identify the property which are vested property but not possessed by the government.

In the study area of Shankhari Bazar, the residents mentioned that 15-20% of the properties are vested. However only few properties could be identified where the inhabitants agreed and all of those are under government possession. Those properties were in the most dilapidated and dangerous condition in the entire area and under the risk of collapse. In case of old Dhaka it is estimated, by the residents and some other researchers, that almost 30-40% of the properties are grabbed or acquired as vested property. However, it is quite difficult to identify the buildings that are vested, people are unwilling to discuss in this issue. The following figure showing the holdings with vested property is prepared based on discussion with the key informants in the area, and therefore obviously this is an approximation, not an appropriate map.

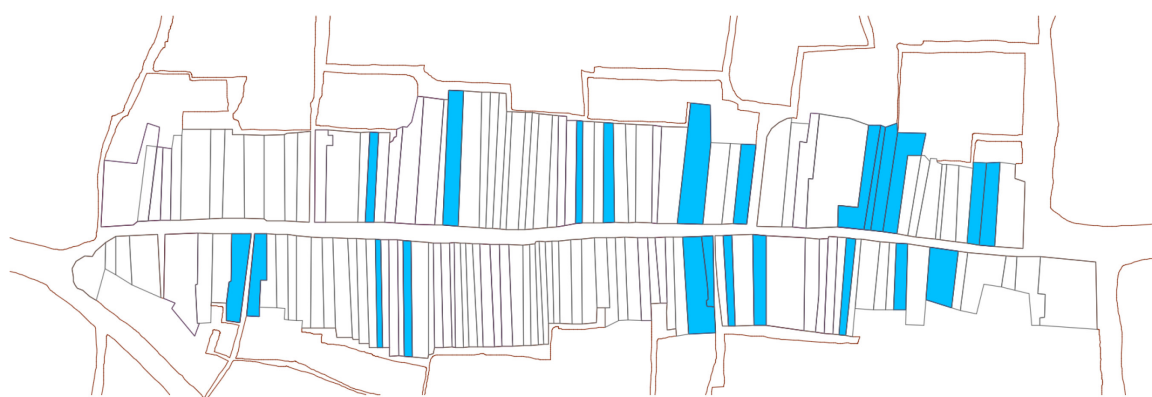


Figure 23: Shankhari Bazar, location of plots with vested properties

Source: Author.

The claim and perceptions about the amount of vested property and its implication to the neighborhoods could not be verified from the land registration department due to inaccessibility to such database. Also with different public authorities and urban excerpts expressed reluctance to discuss about the issues of vested property.

Illegal occupation

Illegal occupation and forceful encroachment can take place in both public and private properties. In case of private property, illegal occupation happens in most cases by local powerful persons or by members of the family who are not the rightful owner or who want to consume more than they are entitled to.

Encroachment of public and even private properties is widely practiced in the city to make slum¹⁶ and squatter¹⁷ settlements. In most cases, encroachment is done by those who are powerful, in respect to political power, financial capability and regarded as

¹⁶ The term slum usually refer to any shanty town in an urban areas without any reference to the land ownership it is located on.

¹⁷ The term usually refers to any shanty town in urban areas that is located on encroached public land.

influential in the society, and then they organize slum or squatter settlements which are rented to the users.

In case of Shankhari Bazar, illegal occupation was found to limited extent and mostly within the family affairs. In case of entire old Dhaka, illegal occupation by local powerful elites is the dominating trend. Slum and squatter settlement is of less importance as the target, as the encroachment is primarily targeted to single land parcel for real estate business.

4.2.4 Concentration of ethnic minorities

Some ethnic group of minority people may have some certain way of lifestyle. Especially if the minority community belongs to lower income group or social status, then the neighborhood is in the risk of social exclusion and poor living environment.

Social exclusion was associated to specific caste or race in Bangladesh in ancient time in the history; it is not in practice any more. In case of urban area, social status varies, but social exclusion in the literal term is not evident. Yet, to some extent, the stigma associated to some caste prevails, for example, *Dalit* people in the city. The Dalit population is considered to be lower caste of the Hindu community, which is an ethnic minority community. Therefore, these people are minority inside a minority group, which is referred to as the other of the others in the subaltern discourse (Spivak, 1988; Mamoon and Rahman, 2009). The Dalit people work as sweepers for generations. There are about half a million Dalit people living in the city in the sweeper colonies, designated only for them, in the area of Ganoktuli, Dayaganj, Dhalpur, Agargaon and Mohammadpur (Masud, 2006). The first three colonies are located in old Dhaka. The Dalit community is deprived of very basic rights like education and health. In addition to very lower level of human skill on their capacity, the neighborhoods also lack basic and even sometime minimum standards of services. The neighborhoods are considered the most deprived in the city (Masud, 2006). Besides the poorest quality of living standard in their neighborhoods, they also face vandalism and forceful eviction from their land by the local powerful elites who want to grab their land (The Daily Star, 2011c; Masud, 2006).

4.2.5 Change in social-cultural values

Changes in social, cultural and also political perspective have profound and long term effect on the way of living and consequently on neighborhoods which may contribute to surfacing of urban blighted area. Rapid urbanization and globalization are significant factors, among many others, that shape social and cultural values. The young generation is, therefore, more open and probably have different values than the traditional values.

In the areas of old Dhaka, it is a very common complaint by the residents that the values are changing and getting downwards. The residents in Shankhari Bazar, and in some other neighborhoods in old Dhaka also, mentions the change in the social and cultural values have adverse effect on the neighborhood in a variety of ways. The most prominent change is the loosening of family and social tie that makes well off people leave the area and increasing lack of belongingness. Lack of belongingness paves the way for destruction of built and cultural heritage and negligence about the development and welfare of the neighborhood. The elderly residents mention that the younger generation considerably lacks belongingness to the neighborhoods and respect for the traditional lifestyle and traditional occupations. However, according to the opinion of the young residents, though the number of young respondents is low compared to the middle aged and elderly respondents, it appears that they are not happy with the traditional occupation and they have a different view on the traditional lifestyle and the neighborhood, but not necessarily all of them are willing to move out and do not consider the welfare of the neighborhood. When compared to the opinion of the young generation and their future plan as well as their participation in the neighborhood affairs, it becomes clearer that in general the young generation is not willing to consider for the traditional life in the traditional city center, they consider the area blighted. Only a small part of the young generation is aware and willing to contribute for the traditional character of their neighborhood. This finding is also supported by the urban professional and scholars.

4.2.6 Awareness about built heritage

Residents in the old city rarely show any consideration for their built heritage which paves the way for degradation of the built environment easily. Of course lack of education is an important contributor to the ignorance, but there are other reasons too.

Instant financial gain appears to be the most convincing fact that allures the individual property owner to go for redevelopment, in most case, as real estate development. Moreover, besides poverty that compels the private owner to neglect maintenance, there is not enough activity from the public sector to support private owners and raise the awareness about their built heritage. Not all the buildings, that deserve to be declared as heritage, are declared as heritage and protected against improper use and modification. This responsibility is solely with the Department of Archeology, and the department is primarily concerned about public buildings. Buildings under private ownership seem to be under no one's care except the owner.

Buildings which are privately owned are in the greatest risk. The private owners have, in most cases, little consideration about the social worth of the property and abuse the built heritage in many ways, like making alteration or addition without any

consideration of the architectural style, having inappropriate or harmful use, overcrowding, over use etc. However, the owners cannot be and should not be blamed solely for their action. Sometimes the owner is aware but lack the financial resource for maintenance of the property; and there is no incentive, for example financial or technical support, from the public sector. Again, in some cases the owner is aware about the heritage value, but the instant financial gain from redevelopment is far more strong incentive than social worth of preservation.

Lack of awareness is a well perceived reason that contributes to the destruction and abuse of built heritage by all the stakeholders. On the other hand, at least in last few years there is a lot of promotional work for the heritage value of the old Dhaka by a few activists and organizations and also the civil society is concerned and sometimes involved in such activities. The NGO named Urban Study Group (USG) is very much vocal against demolition of built heritage and have done a lot of publicity work for the conservation of built heritage in old Dhaka. the Asiatic Society, Bangladesh is also prominent in this regard. Shankhari Bazar is a target area for the USG for tourism lead conservation and awareness raising program for the residents. This NGO can claim the credit that, basically due to their activities the RAJUK has declared Shankhari Bazar and other 12 streets and 93 buildings in the city as protected heritage. When consulted with the residents in Shankhari Bazar, it was clear that the residents are well aware about the heritage value of their buildings and the USG earns the credit. But, it was also clear that the residents are not happy with it, they do not want their building to be declared as heritage which endows the responsibility of maintenance solely to them without any help from the public sector. In some other neighborhoods in the old Dhaka, when consulted with the residents, it seems that knowledge about the built heritage prevails, but financial constraints as well as financial gain pave the way for demolition of built heritage.

4.2.7 Informal economic activities

Juxtaposition of residential and working area is traditional pattern of urban settlement in Dhaka. Neighborhoods are concentration population of same occupation; thus, the traditional neighborhoods were, and to some extent still are, clustered according to profession. People do not consider manufacturing and business activities in the residential area as something negative. In course of time, the pattern has changed, and at present there prevails a huge concentration of informal economic activities which are often harmful for the neighborhood.

Informal economic activities in the old Dhaka are very much home based and linked horizontally. People make their products at home or in the backyard and sell them in the street front shops or simply in the street, it is to be mentioned that ground floor is

always used for commercial purpose in the old Dhaka as well as in the entire city with only a few exceptional neighborhoods. This concentration of economic activities is often considered as an indicator of deterioration of the residential quality by the urban professionals as well as urban elite groups, and in most cases they do not reside in old Dhaka. On the contrary, the residents in old Dhaka find it as their normal way of life style. Additionally, they do not want their work place somewhere else and far from the living area. Sometimes, it is also difficult to move the business far from their home due to the nature of the business; for example, the *goyla*¹⁸ in the Shankhari Bazar street makes his product early morning at home and then he sells it in the street, he cannot go further because in 2/3 hours the milk products will spoil and he has a regular client group on the spot he sells every morning. Also some business has specific customer groups and specific business hour. For example, vendors sell flowers (probably from collected from his own yard or home grown plants) and small packs containing flowers, wood apple leaves, mango leaves, banana leaves etc. in the early morning in the street. These items are required for *puja* rituals practiced by the Hindu people, and people from all over the city come to Shankhari Bazar to collect these essential ritual items in early morning. Of course flower business come back again in the evening to cater the need of flowers for the evening prayer, but the main business is an early morning event. Some vendors also sell fish and vegetables in the street, they collect their supply from the kitchen markets in early morning and sell in the street offering the residents the comfort of saving the travel to kitchen markets. Also there are some seasonal business, for example selling new currency bills instead of old and damaged bills before festivals¹⁹ and selling clay idols of gods or goddesses before the worship ritual. Bazar economy is a regular character of the old town. The following images show some example of the informal businesses in the Shankhari Bazar.

¹⁸ *Goyla* means milk product producer and seller.

¹⁹ In Bangladesh, and in neighboring countries also, it is a common practice to give money as gift to the kids by the elders during the festivals like Eid or Puja or new year's celebration. Thus, on this occasion demand of new bills get high. Some people collect new bills from the banks and exchange them with old and damaged bills for a small price. This is a popular seasonal business.



Plate 13: Informal businesses in Shankhari Bazar. (clockwise) A goyla selling milk products, a street vendor selling vegetables, a woman selling flowers for puja ritual, a vendor selling fish, a shop with clay idols and vendors selling new currency bills.

Source: Author.

It is necessary to consider that, business and production activities are perceived, and also in practice, as non-separable part of the life in old Dhaka. And these activities not necessarily deteriorate the living condition by their presence per se. What makes the neighborhood' living condition worsen is harmful manufacturing activities. For example, the tannery industries in the Hazaribagh area are polluting the area for many decades. The recent increase, which stated two decades earlier, in the chemical industries and warehouses in Nimtoli and Lalbagh area exerts a sever risk to the life of the residents. The Nimtoli tragedy in 2010 already caused 117 lives and still the dangerous business is running in the area (Alam, 2012; Sarkar and Mollah, 2010).

The old town is congested and thousands of informal businesses operate there. For the authorities, it is next to impossible to find an unauthorized business there if the local people do not cooperate and also the authorities are relaxed about the old town (Alam, 2012). On the other hand, it appears that the authorities' concern to keep the other areas, that means the planned and rich neighborhoods, free of unclean and noxious business (for example leather, chemical, plastic and other recycling works, metal works and foundry, automobile scrap and workshop, metal scrap, many types of of scrap business etc.) turns out to be the reason for their reluctance to administer such business in the old city. Eventually the old city has become the mushrooming ground for such businesses mentioned. Many areas of old Dhaka, for instance, Lalbagh, Shahidnagar, Begumbazar, Nimtoli, Aminbazar etc. are under sever risk of environmental pollution

and health hazard which is also recognized by the spatial planning document (RAJUK, 2010). Some areas such as Nawab Katra, Mahuttuli, Bangshal, Siddique Bazar, Sat Rowza, Babu Bazar and Armanitola are under risk of fire and explosion due to chemical industries and warehouses (Mollah and Adhikary, 2012).

4.2.8 Business environment

The neighborhoods in old Dhaka were established according to specific profession and they had run their own business. This is still the pattern of old Dhaka. Probably not any more the same original business, but the still the prevailing pattern is different business in different neighborhoods. Some can be mentioned here, plastic recycling and plastic products in Lalbagh, chemical products in Nwab Katra, Mahuttuli and Bangshal, rubber business in Siddique Bazar, sanitary ware business in Alu Bazar, motor parts business and vehicle repairing business in Dholaikhal, goldsmith works in Tanti Bazar and Pannitola, food grain business in Babu Bazar, vegetable market in Shyam Bazar, cloth market in Islampur, watch, paint and spectacles market in Patuatuli etc. The neighborhoods are well recognized in the city, as well as in the hole country, for their particular business which is normally at wholesale scale rather than retail business.

Neighborhoods often create specific business environment, on the other hand, specific business also requires certain neighborhoods and certain client group (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Shankhari Bazar can exemplify the relation between the business influences and the general wellbeing of a neighborhood like some other cities in South Asia.

Traditionally Shankhari Bazar houses the *Shankha* (the conch shell bangle) and *Shankho* (the whole conch shell) business from the beginning of its existence. The entire operation, from production to trade, of the *Shankha* business takes place only in this neighborhood of the city. Shankhari Bazar also supplies *Shankha* products to other parts of the country. The conch shell bangle and whole conch shell are purely religious products. The bangle, which is called *Shankha*, is used only by married Hindu women as a sacred symbol of being married in addition to vermilion. It is also believed, according to Hindu mythology, that wearing *Shankha* is a good omen, along with vermilion, for the welfare of the husband. Besides, *Shankha* is an essential item for *puja* (worship) rituals dedicated to different goddesses as well as gods also. The whole conch shell, which is called *Shankho*, is also used for worship and daily prayers; it is also used in social festivals and family programs as a *mangolik* (good omen) item. Most importantly, this conch shell business is associated with Hindu religion, not with anything else.

The demand of conch shell products is declining due to various reasons. The most popular explanation, by researchers, civil society, social workers, Bangladesh Small and

Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) and surprisingly some people from the Hindu community as well, is that there is a decline in demand from the users; the modern and educated Hindu women do not like to have a traditional symbol of being married. This fact is true, but besides the declining recognition of traditional symbol, there are other explanations. *Shankha* symbolizes a woman as married and Hindu, which sometimes also expose her to teasing and humiliation to varying extent depending on the socio-political context. This discourages some women to wear *Shankha* which eventually contributes to the decline in demand. The ever increasing price of conch shell is an understandable problem; in addition to that availability of the recent production of cheap and long lasting plastic imitation of *shankha* in India has diverted the poorer user groups towards it. Nonetheless, perhaps the other significant reason, but very often unnoticed and neglected, is the decline in the number of Hindu population, not the decline of acceptance and demand. In last 40 years, the number of Hindu population have decreased considerably (Barkat, 2000a).

The conch shell business has reduced considerably in course of time. At present there are other businesses besides conch shell the business such as metal products, stone products, cork crafts, *baniyati* (essential items for worship rituals) products, pottery and *protima* (clay statue of deities), restaurant, barber shop etc. It is an interesting observation that except the regular neighborhood commercial activities like grocery, barber, small restaurant, tailor, pharmacy etc., almost all other businesses are related to the religion in some way or other. This neighborhood is the only area in the city that provides the products required for religious rituals as well as social festivals for the Hindu community.

The following figures depict the concentration of conch shell business and other business that are related to Hindu religion in Shankhari Bazar.





Figure 25: Shankhari Bazar, location of plots with business related to Hindu religion.
Source: Author.

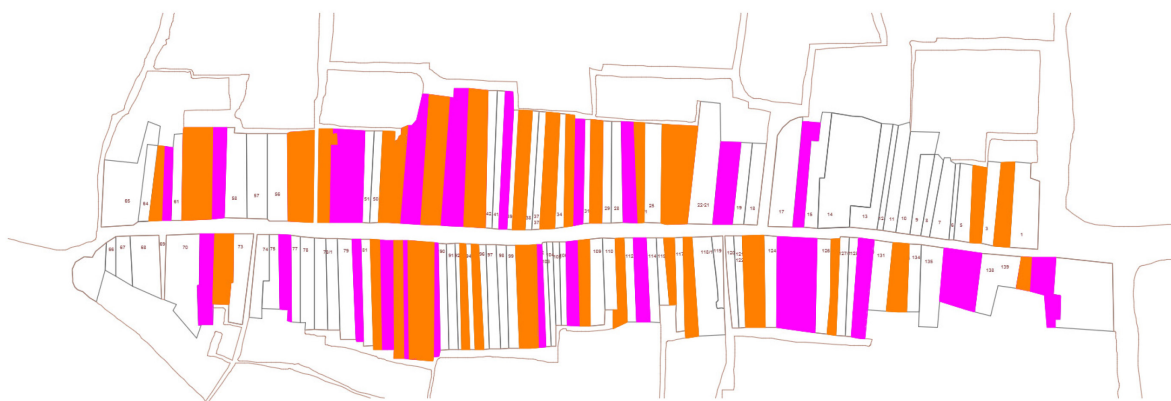


Figure 26: Shankhari Bazar, location of plots with conch shell and religion related business together.
Source: Author.

The following two images exemplify typical conch shell products shop and *baniyati* shops in the area.



Plate 14: Two small and narrow conch shell products shops side by side (left) and a small *baniyati* shop with hanging headgears that are specially required for Hindu marriage ceremony in display (right).
Source: Author.

Thus, the entire business in Shankhari Bazar has a specific client group which is diminishing. When asked, the conch shell entrepreneurs in Shankhari Bazar mentioned very clearly that their traditional business is not running as in earlier times, other entrepreneurs also agree with this. The declining business has an obvious effect on the welfare of the neighborhood.

4.2.9 Crime and communal politics

Crime is spread all over the city and appears to have no special association with the old town. The officer in charge of the police box in Shankhari Bazar mentioned that the crime situation in old Dhaka has no special character. He also mentioned that according to the police record, crime rate is lower in old Dhaka compared to the number of people living there.

Communal politics seems to be complicated in case of Dhaka. If communal politics is considered to care for religious views, then it gets more complicated. No one, except the religious minority population believes that communal politics exist. The Hindu community in the city strongly believes that they are not only being marginalized in the personal level, but also the Hindu populated areas are subjected to negligence and discrimination.

Marginalization and oppression of minority communities is not uncommon in Bangladesh. There have been several incidents of communal unrest and atrocity against minorities in different corners of the country since independence, and these are documented, though not always in the form of in-depth and structured research. A few to mention, country wide violence against Hindu community in 1992 (Sarker, 1993) and in 2001 (Azad, 2003; Benkin, 2012; Kabir, 2005; Bangali and Khan, 2003), Ramu violence in against Buddhist community in 2012 (Sarkar and Habib, 2012; Manik, 2012; The Daily Star, 2012h) etc. are recognized large scale incidents of communal violence. While similar events take place sporadically, of which the latest example includes violence against the *Santal*²⁰ community in Gobindaganj area (Karmaker and Hoque, 2016; The Daily Star, 2016e; The Daily Star, 2016a) and against Hindu community in Nasirnagar area (The Daily Star, 2016b; The Daily Star, 2016f; Hashmi, 2016) in 2016. There exists only a few methodical research on discrimination against the minorities, such as by professor Barkat and his team (Barakat, 2000), but in general, there is lack

²⁰ The Santal or Saontal are a scheduled tribe who live mainly in Nepal, India and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the Santals are known as one of the oldest and largest indigenous communities, living mainly in the northwestern part of the country. They have their own language and rich culture. Land that belongs to this indigenous people is a lucrative piece of cake for the land grabbers.

of enough methodical research that can conclude to discrimination against the minorities.

It is also to mention that, as observed from different incidents and based on the cases reported in the local and national newspapers, it appears that incidents of discrimination and violence against minorities mainly take place in the rural and sub-urban areas. In urban areas, such incidents take place rarely, if it is not a very large scale occurrence, such as the case of 1992. The area of Shankhari Bazar and other inner neighborhoods in Dhaka with concentration of minority community have rarely seen such unpleasant scene. Probably Shankhari Bazar has never faced communal violence after the massacre during the liberation war in 1971. Though in 1992 several incidents of attack took place in Dhaka, but the residents in Shankhari Bazar mentioned that they were safe and they mention this safely pertain to the very development pattern, the narrow road with only one entry and one exit and design of the houses. In a nutshell, it can be said that there is no strong documented evidence to support the claim by the Hindu community in Shankhari Bazar and/or other neighborhoods in the inner city are being marginalized due the concentration of minority population. It is also necessary to mention that almost all other stakeholders, except only a few, either disagree with this claim or are not willing to talk about this. There might be some relevance if the incidents of communal unrest are analyzed and this issue requires further in-depth investigation.

An observation in this regard worth's mention. Almost all the houses in Shankhari Bazar houses a temple. Actually, these temples are private space for worship or just a chapel at best. These chapels or private prayer spaces are usually open for the neighbors to make payer or to participate in the owners' religious rituals. Temple is perceived as public place and demands for security. There are only a few true temples in the area and proper security is provided to these temples. Yet, this private prayer spaces and chapels are labeled as temples by the local residents, possibly because the connotation of a temple offers a sense of security. The following image shows the location of temples, chapels and chapels that have been abandoned or not in regular use or had been made inaccessible for the neighbors in last 5-7 years.

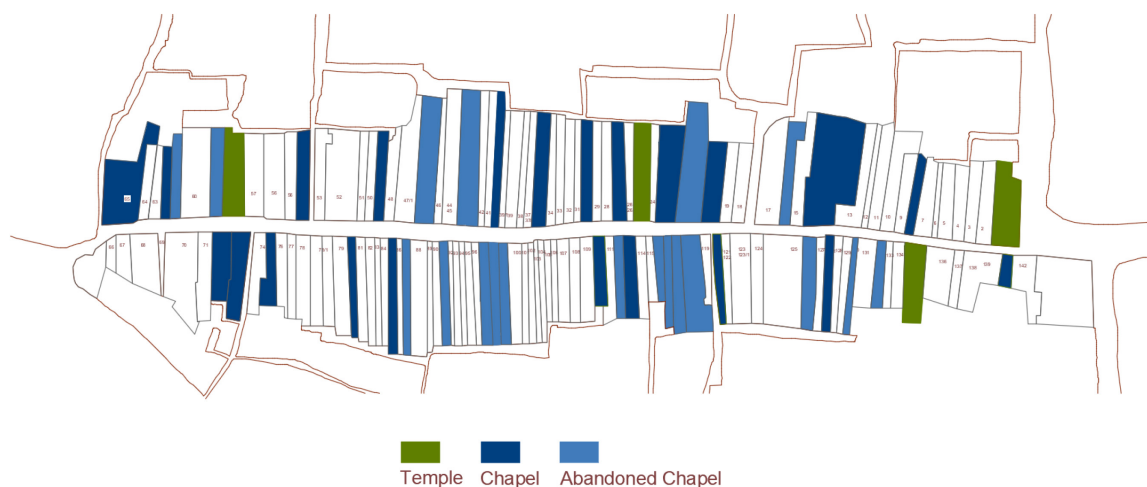


Figure 27: Shankhari Bazar, location of plots with temples, chapels and chapels that has been abandoned recently.

Source: Author.

4.3 Existing urban structure

Existing urban structure in many cases, particularly in the historical city core, are already in a shattered stage and difficult to modernize following the new urban norms. It is also necessary to mention that in Bangladesh, there is still not set planning standard for urban development, what prevails is perception by the authorities. The authorities' perception is again shaped by those who have generally an academic background, mostly in the field of civil engineering and, in rare case, urban planning in North American schools. Therefore, the perception of planning standard appears to be generally guided by the principles of a car driven city with strict zoning, which is reflected in the planned residential areas of Gulshan and Dhanmondi, for example. The authorities, RAJUK and others responsible for providing urban services, usually have the idea that the existing urban situation in the old city cannot be improved and modernized and the existing urban structure per se helps to set urban blight. Field observation and interview with the local people reveal that some features of the existing urban structures are in vulnerable state and contribute to urban blight. The major features are as follows.

4.3.1 Housing stock

Condition of housing stock in old Dhaka varies. The condition varies not only due to the age of the built form, but also due to the recent housing development pattern. The problem associated with housing stocks can be discussed separately for old housing stock and for those that have been constructed in last 30 years.

Aging housing stock

The city of Dhaka ages a few centuries, however the built environment is not that old. The oldest surviving building in the city is Binat Bibi Mosque located in the Narinda area and constructed in the year 1457 although the structure seen today has gone through several modifications (Mamoon, 1993). Most of the old building in Dhaka are from the colonial time and a very few from the precolonial time. Amongst the old buildings that are from precolonial era almost all are religious structures and starting from the later stage of colonial era there are other types of buildings. Dhaka has an austerity of old buildings and even lees of them have survived to date. Here, in this discussion buildings that were built before the partition of India in 1947, therefore approximately 70 years old at least, are considered as old.

The buildings from the pre-colonial age are already aged and structurally in a vulnerable state due to various reasons like lime-concrete construction technique, climatic reason, overuse etc. The buildings from colonial age are also in a dilapidated condition except those that maintained and owned by the Department of Archeology or other public institutions. In general, the old buildings under private ownership or disputed ownership are in worse condition.

In the area of Shankhari Bazar, detail and authentic data about the building age is not available owing to the lack of a reliable property documentation and scientific study on that. From the architectural expression, most of the buildings are considered to date from colonial period while there are some buildings that predate the colonial age. And also there are a considerable number of buildings that has been built in last 30 years. Old buildings are, as observed, in very poor condition due to overuse, inappropriate use, negligence, lack of maintenance etc. In 2004, an old 6 storied building at holding number 81 collapsed claiming 19 lives, probably the new six storied building on the next plot, number 80, caused the collapse of the old adjacent building (Khan, 2004; The Daily Star, 2004a; Roy, 2004; The Daily Star, 2004c).

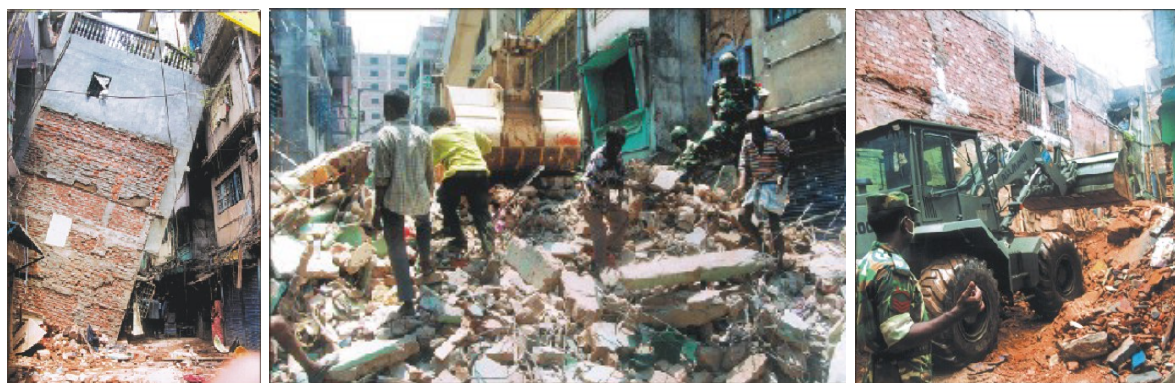


Plate 15: 2004 Shankhari Bazar tragedy. The collapsed building (left), and rescue operation afterwards (middle and right).

Source: (left to right) Images from The Daily Star (2004a), Roy (2004) and The Daily Star (2004c).

Afterwards and immediately before the incident RJUK and DCC had identified 572 to 726 buildings between 30 and 350 years old, in three *thanas*²¹ of old Dhaka as most vulnerable and asked the owners to demolish the buildings (Rahman, 2004a; Khan, 2004). In the Shakhari Bazar area, out of 142 buildings, 91 buildings have been found to be risky and 32 as extremely vulnerable (Roy and Morshed, 2011). In October 2012, a building on the next road collapsed, while being demolished, on two buildings on the Shankhari Bazar street. The following images and figure might provide a hint to the vulnerable housing condition in Shankhari Bazar.



Plate 16: A dilapidated building is getting collapsed and debris fill the narrow approach from the street, plot 26 (left) and a view showing a dilapidated house with fallen roof (right)

Source: Author.



Figure 28: Shankhari Bazar, location of plots with vulnerable buildings.

Source: Author.

However, architectural expression in the street façade in old Dhaka is not reliable and could be misleading. The city authority occasionally, usually after an incident of old

²¹ *Thana* means police station. Several neighborhoods come under the jurisdiction of a *thana* and it is used as an administrative boundary for convenience.

building collapse, earmark buildings that are structurally vulnerable and provide notice to the owner for demolition. To avoid this, owners of the old buildings go for face uplifting of to prevent demolition. It is also very common practice to add 2-3 new floors without considering the structural quality of the original 2/3 storied brick buildings with load bearing wall system, which eventually make the buildings weaker and risky.



Plate 17: Old building, new buildings and old buildings with the front façade treated in Shankhari Bazar,

Source: Author.

Though, in general all the old buildings are in poor condition, the buildings declared as vested property were found to be in the worst condition during the field observation, as the residents either do not have the authority to invest or lack the motivation due to the problems of vested property. The following images shows the poor condition in a building declared as vested property. Moreover, the entire Shankhari Bazar street is declared as protected in 2009 and modifications are prohibited without due permission from the authority and eventually this confines the owners from any kind of repair or maintenance work.



Plate 18: Poor condition of buildings that are declared as vested property. (clockwise) Entry to the building, inner courtyard, and rare courtyards.

Source: Author.

These old buildings also lack healthy living conditions inside. The plots are long and narrow, with scope of openings only in the front and rare side. There is always a shop in the street front, therefore in the ground floor openings are possible only in the rare side. Typically, the only source of light and ventilation is the inner courtyard, rare courtyard, which is reserved for utility services like kitchen, toilet etc., and sometimes courtyard in the roof or any other upper level. Subdivision and extension of the original single house had first filled the entire plot, then went vertical and then encroached the tiny inner and rare courtyards in most of the old buildings leaving the internal condition very much unhealthy. The following figures and images reveal how the long narrow building gets divided, unhealthy living condition and different types of courtyards in such buildings.

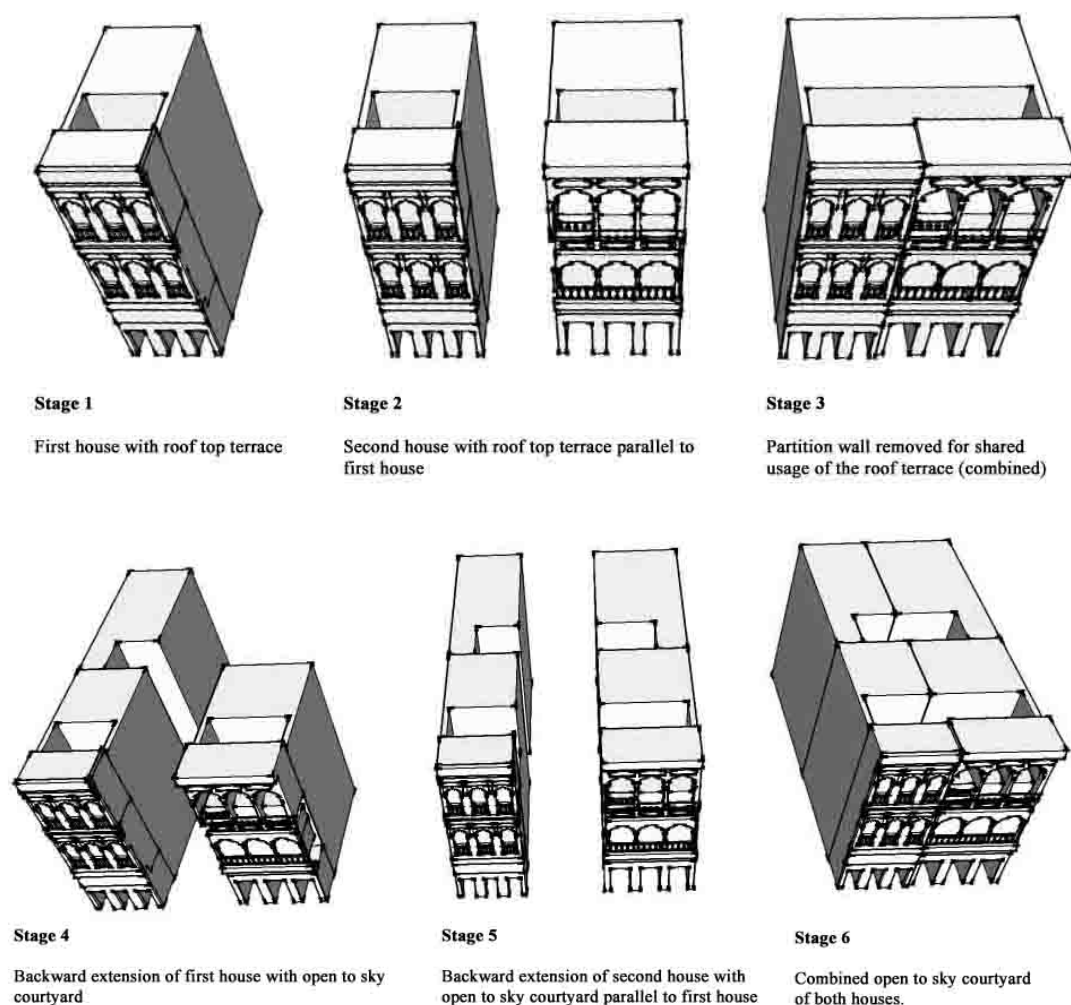


Figure 29: Sketch showing different stages of property subdivision and shared usage of courtyards and roof top terraces.

Source: Ahmed (2012).

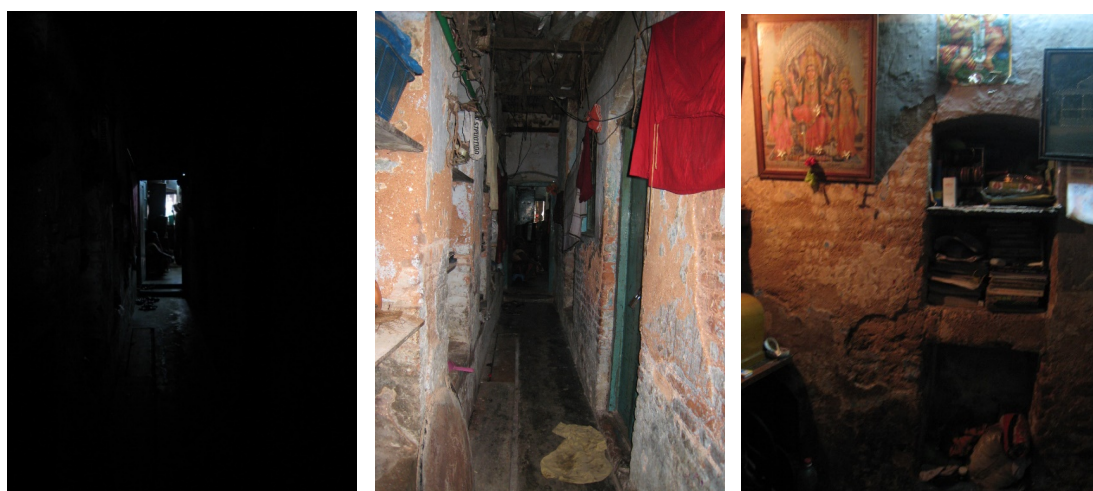


Plate 19: The entry passage from the street front food shop to the residence behind, plot no. 13. Photograph taken without flash (left) and with flash (middle) and a livable room (right) showing total absence of day light and poor living condition.

Source: Author.



Plate 20: Rare courtyard with toilet and washing (left) and courtyard in the roof top (right).
Source: Author.



Figure 30: Traditional old buildings in Shankhari Bazar with inner and rare courtyards. The section showing building no. 32 and images from different buildings to have an idea of courtyard space

Source: Original drawing from Imamuddin et al. (1990) and images taken by the author.

In some other neighborhoods of old Dhaka, a similar situation is observed. Though the number of old buildings is really small at present, but a huge number of the surviving buildings provide poor living condition for the residents.

Newly constructed housing stock

Again, there is lack of reliable data about the age of building in Dhaka. It is considered that the majority of the new buildings were constructed in the 80's when the construction business in the city gained momentum. In old Dhaka, a considerable portion of the existing buildings are from the late Pakistan period and early Bangladesh period. According to the residents and urban professionals, the greatest share of such buildings is less than 30 years old.

The new buildings in Shankhari Bazar are not structurally vulnerable and not exerting any risk to the residents. However, it is extremely difficult to claim that the new buildings provide better living environment for the residents than the old ones. The old buildings were 2/3 storied and had open space in the back or in the middle. The new buildings are constructed on the same narrow plot with almost 100% plot coverage without the rare court and sometimes even without light well. The light and ventilation condition is most often worse than the old buildings. However, due to new construction, the inside is not damp and the stairs are often wider than the old buildings, as seen in the next images.

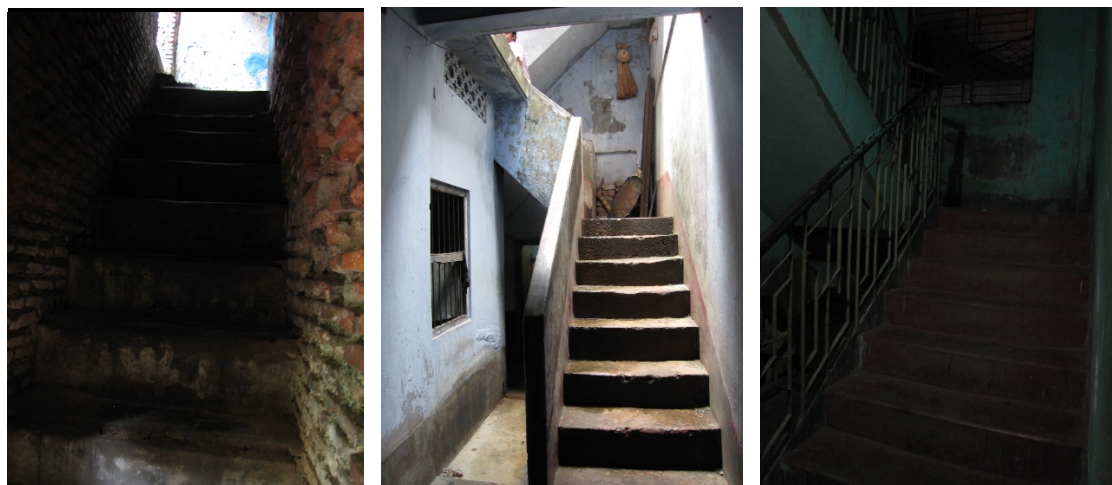


Plate 21: Stair leading to the roof top court in an old building (left) in a new building (middle) and main staircase in the first floor of a new building.

Source: Author.

Besides having unhealthy indoor living condition, the new buildings contribute to another problem, they are not compatible with the traditional urban fabric. The original houses were low-rise 2-3 storied buildings. Then additional floors, sometimes 2-3 more stories, are built on top of the old ones. Another practice takes place; a new building is erected at the back of the plot while the portion in the street front is kept old. The new buildings, as well as additions to the existing floors, are much taller, often 5-8 storied and the façades are completely different compared to the surrounding buildings. At least the street view of the old neighborhood has turned to be chaotic in terms of

architectural expression, as shown in the subsequent images which are followed by the building height map of Shankhari Bazar.

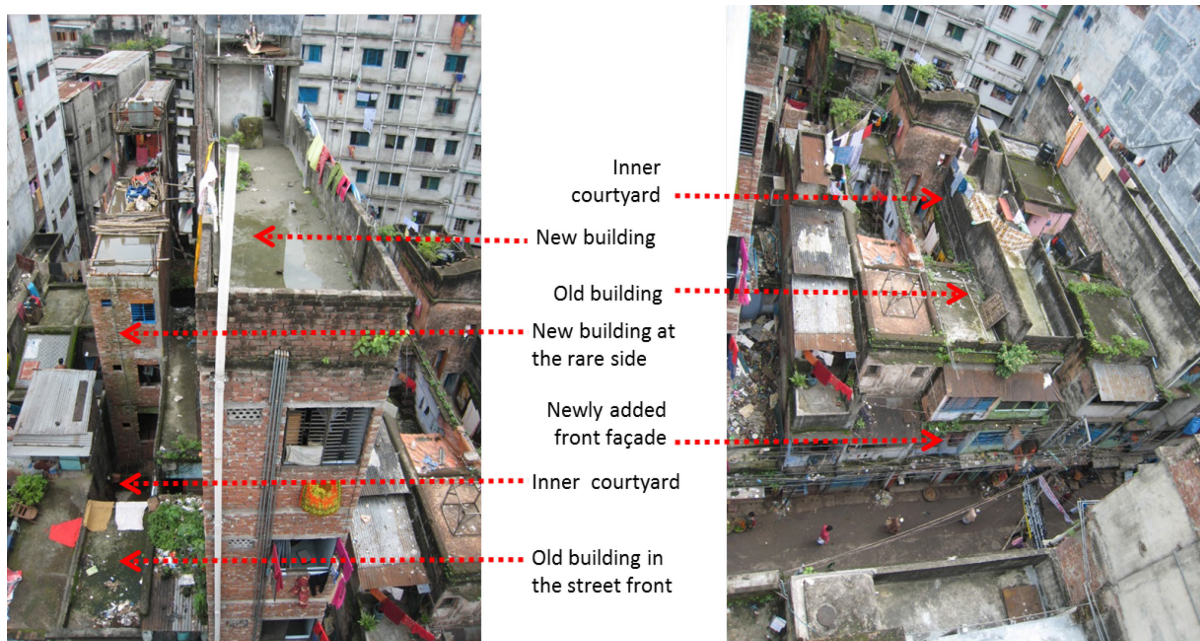


Figure 31: Newly constructed buildings and additions.

Source: Author.

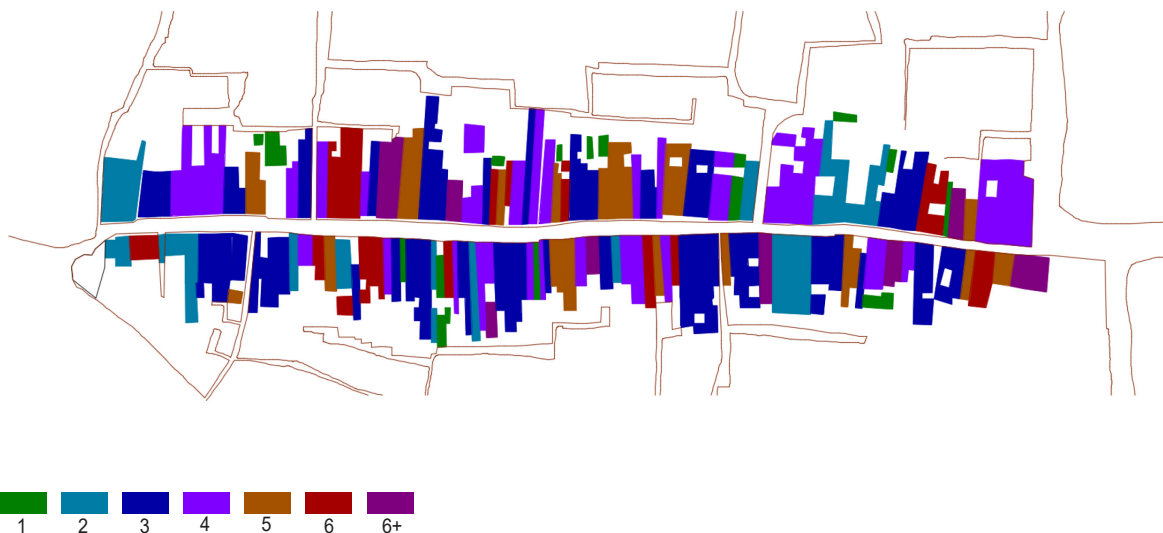


Figure 32: Shankhari Bazar showing building height in different plots.

Source: Author.

The following figure shows the internal condition of a newly constructed building in plot no. 32. The drawing shows the plan of original building. The new one is much higher but not much diverse in planning and follows the traditional pattern; inner courtyard with kitchen and washing facility and rare courtyard with toilets. However, the inner courtyard has shrunk and turned into a light well and rare courtyard has been squeezed and almost disappeared.

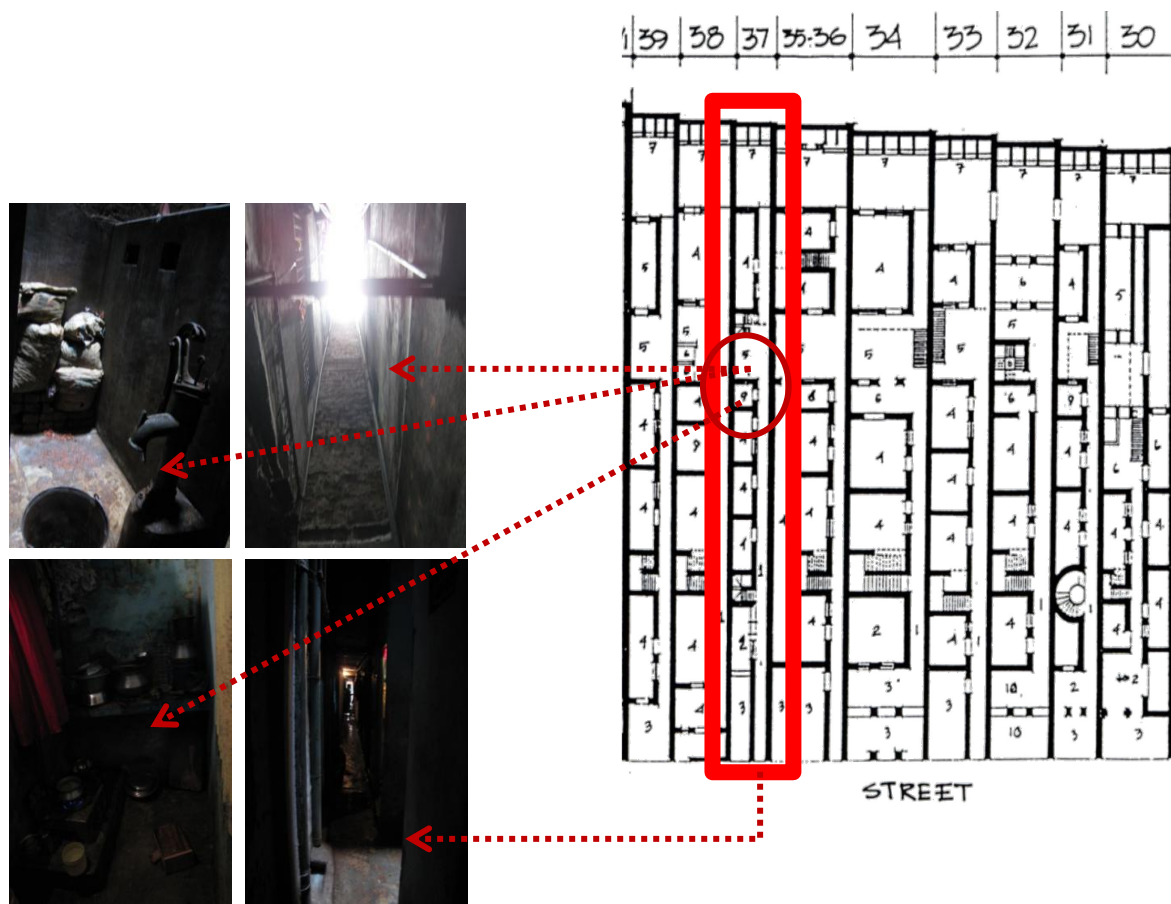


Figure 33: Newly constructed building at plot no. 37, images showing the inner court that turned into a light well, washing and kitchen facility in the court and entrance corridor.

Source: Original drawing from Imamuddin et al. (1990) and images taken by the author.

In other neighborhoods of old Dhaka, a similar situation is observed. Majority of the buildings are new and they are not compatible with the few remaining old buildings. In fact, the old Dhaka has lost the traditional flavor, at least in terms of building façades. The buildings are congested, with almost 100% plot coverage, the exterior façades are heterogeneous and do not have any architectural style and they do not provide a healthy living condition in the interior, at least, in terms of space quality and adequacy, light and ventilation etc. Recently, particularly in last 10-12 years, there is a tendency to build multistoried buildings of 12-18 storied buildings on narrow streets without any consideration for the urban setting of the area. For example, several high rise buildings surrounding the famous Baldha Gaeden in Narinda are affecting the garden as the buildings cast shadow on the garden (Parveen, 2009; Islam, 2003).

It is mandatory to get a permission from RAJUK for any new construction and RAJUK is expected to check the interior space quality, plot coverage, road width, building height, position of any historical monument in the vicinity etc. However in reality, the buildings do not comply with the regulations and a considerable portion of them are constructed illegally. RAJUK simply ignores all the allegation by claiming that they lack

enough manpower and to check everything and the fact that they cannot do anything unless someone files a written complaint against any illegal construction activities.

The new buildings in old Dhaka are considered as squalor and eyesore to scholars, urban professionals and urban activists who are concerned with conservationist approach. On the contrary, to the residents, the new buildings are considered as modern and safe compared to the old buildings. Moreover, living in an old building is not considered prestigious, rather a new and modern house or apartment earns a citizen a better status in the society. And this is true not only in old Dhaka, but also in other areas of the city.

4.3.2 Development pattern

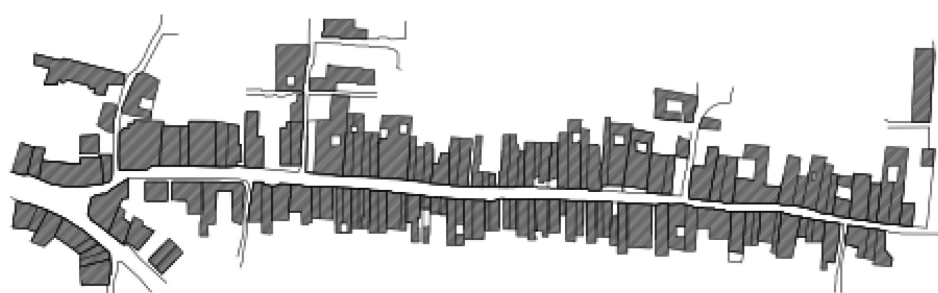
The urban settlements in old Dhaka started to developed in the Mughal time. Dhaka developed organically, not really planned liked some other Mughal cities, the walled city of Shahjahanabad or Fatehpur Sikri, for example. The urban pattern as seen today was established in the later stage of British colonial period. The overall development pattern is still organic in the area of old Dhaka, in the sense that development occurs as something is required rather as preplanned. The urban settlement patterns in these neighborhoods have specific features and are not like the urban settlement pattern in the formally planned areas of new Dhaka. And the old settlement spaces cannot accommodate or converted to the new Dhaka pattern.

The old city is built on pedestrian scale, suitable for horse raiders, animal carts and *palki/duli*²²; a few big roads were also suitable for elephant ride. The roads are very narrow and with numbers of winding lane and by-lanes connected like a maze as well as with numbers of narrow dead ends. Therefore, it does not look simple as grid iron pattern, which is considered as modern by the most of the urban professional in the country and the urban elites as well. The narrow roads are unable to accommodate the rush of motor vehicles today which is why the area is less desired by the urban elites and thus, leaving it for those who do not have or cannot afford to have motor vehicles. These narrow roads are very much difficult to widen for practical reasons. And of course congestion takes place due to population increase and gradual subdivision of plots. The following image can help to understand the gradual intensification of Shankhari Bazar.

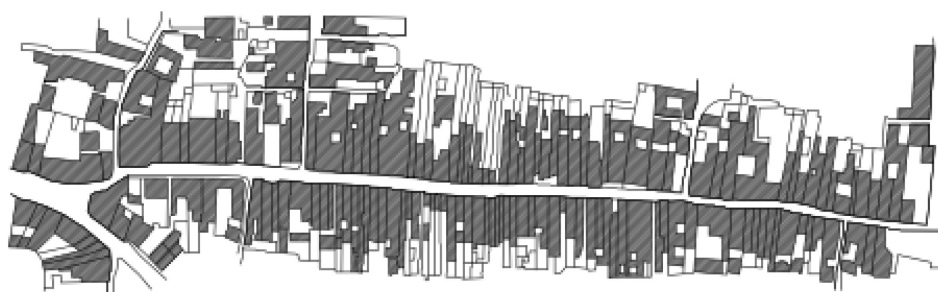
²² *Palki* or *duli* refer to small chambers carried by human and usually used for women and aged people, but also used for others.



Map of Shankharibazar – late 18th century



Map of Shankharibazar – mid 19th century



Map of Shankharibazar – 1940

Figure 34: Gradual development of congestion in Shankhari Bazar
Source: Ahmed (2012).

The core old city was always congested compared to the later developed area and at present the entire old city is very much congested. The buildings are also congested and very often with 100% plot coverage. The old buildings are not suitable to accommodate modern urban facilities, like air conditioning system or modular built-in kitchen or modern bathroom fittings for example. The newly built buildings are more congested and do not offer modern and luxurious urban facilities. These buildings are generally residential and the primary target group of tenants is the people of low to middle income bracket. Therefore, usually they offer just basic services which are very

often inadequate. The following image can help to get some idea about the congested development pattern of the old city.

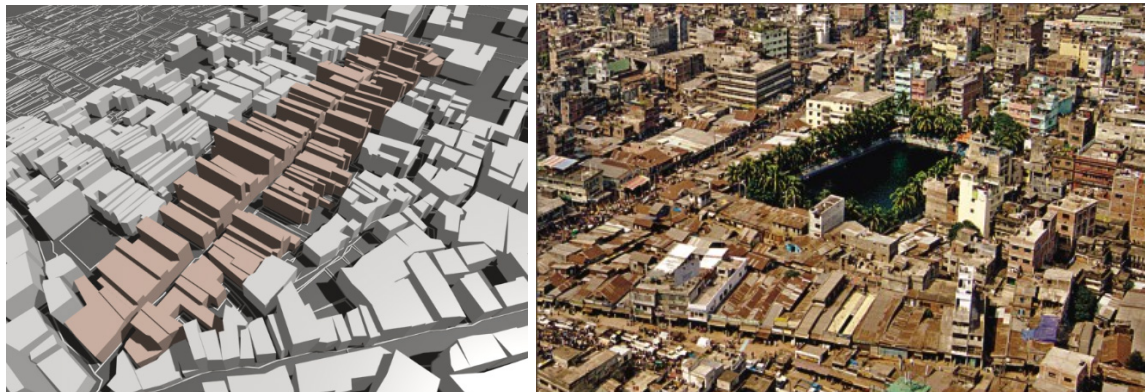


Plate 22: Congested buildings and narrow road in the study area, Shankhari Bazar (left) and s in old Dhaka.

Source: (left) Haider (2005) and (right) Hossain (2008).

The congestion and maze of circulation paths are common urban pattern of the old city. Long narrow buildings with lower entrance placed side by side along the road is a particular pattern found in Shankhari Bazar and adjacent neighborhoods of Tanti Bazar, Pannitola, Ray Shaheb Bazar and parts of Mitford Road and Islampur Road. Some urban researches have mentioned that this pattern existed along the whole Islampur Road and some other areas of the city core. In these areas, the street is the only available public open space for the community as well as the only space to lay the service lines like water, sewerage, gas supply etc.

In general, the urban service provider agencies, the municipality and RJUK find it very difficult to modernize the area according to their perceived standers of urban development as well as their capacity, technique and resources available for implementation. Therefore, old urban settlements are in very often found in a state offering poor living quality.

4.3.3 Mixed land use

Mixed land use, that is living and working in the same place is very traditional to Asian urban culture. Particularly urban settlements are set up according to specific trade or occupation. Obviously Dhaka is not an exception. This can be understood from the names of urban area; the name an area is derived according to the business or profession of the inhabitants of the neighborhood. For example, Mahutuli for elephant caretakers, Malakarnagar for gardeners, Tanti Bazar for weavers, Sutrapur for woodworkers, Kumartuli for potters etc. (Ahmed, 2008a).

Extensive mixed land use has affected the quality of living environment in some neighborhoods and sometimes nonconforming and harmful land use, such as workshops and industries for chemicals, tannery, foundry work etc., is practiced in

neighborhoods which further deteriorates the quality. However, the residents are not unhappy with mixed land use unless the land use poses risk to the residents. They rather opt for some commercial uses in the neighborhood. In the area of Dholaikhal, the residents protested establishment of foundry works, however the motor vehicle repairing workshops, which are operating there for very long time, are accepted by the residents. Similarly, residents are quiet unhappy and frightened with the chemical workshops in Lalbagh but the plastic recycling workshops are accepted. In fact, commercial, both business and manufacturing, activities in the residential are well accepted by the residents as it is an established traditional lifestyle of the inner city. Only a few areas in the old Dhaka were established as purely residential, Larmini Street, Rankin Street and Wari for example. These neighborhoods were established in the late 19th century by the British government as upscale residential area for the government officers (Rahman, 2011; Mamoon, 1993). In course of time all such neighborhood have adopted the traditional shop-house style accommodated commercial activities in the neighborhood. At present it is almost impossible to find a neighborhood in old Dhaka which is purely residential.

An interesting observation is that the residents of old Dhaka do not consider the mixed land use as an indicator of poor living condition. While, number of urban scholars, professional and as well as members of the civil society very often considers the mixed land use pattern as an indication of poor living environment. They are also vocal about retaining the pure residential quality as the way to upgrade the inner city and in most cases in favor of removing commercial activities from old Dhaka regardless of their nature and role in the neighborhoods. It appears that, unless the land use does not pose any risk to the surrounding neighborhood, it does not deteriorate the quality of life while the residents accept it as their lifestyle.

4.3.4 Open space and recreation facilities

Recreational facilities and open spaces are unevenly distributed in the city of Dhaka. The old town is the most densely populated part of the city. However, compared to the population there is severe lack of open space and recreational facilities.

Old Dhaka is densely populated as well as densely built. There are very few public open spaces, namely Bahadurshah Park, Siraj-Ud-Doula Park, Baldha Garden, Lalbagh Fort, Ahsan MonZil, Dupkhola Maath (playground), Bakshi Bazar Maath, Gol Talab (pond), Bangshal Deeghee (pond) for example. Only a few of these open spaces offer entry without a fee which limits the option for low income people. The next figure illustrates the scarcity of open space in old Dhaka.

local (public) libraries, gymnasiums, cultural institutions etc. belongs to this category. However, such facilities are very much limited and decreasing in number.

Social festivals like the *Chaitra Sankranti*²⁵, *Halkhata*²⁶ in Bengali New Year and religious festivals like *Eid*²⁷ rally, *Jonmasti*²⁸ rally, *Muharram*²⁹ rally, *Durga Puja*³⁰ etc. *Eid* rally and *Jonmasti* rally were out of practice for a long time and has been reintroduced for last few years, and are source of recreation for the local people. In this regard it is necessary to mention that some festivals are celebrated in public scale only in old Dhaka, *Halkhata* and *Chaitra Sankranti* for example, and some Hindu festivals only in Shankhari Bazar, such as *Holi*³¹.



Plate 23: *Janmasti rally in Shankhari Bazar (left) and people enjoying the rally (right) from their houses (right)*

Source: Author.

²⁵ This is the last day of the month Chaitra which is the last month in the Bengali calendar. This festival is to say good bye to the year bygone.

²⁶ This is practice in the business community to start the new book of accounting in the Bengali new year. At present this practice is primarily limited to small scale and traditional business.

²⁷ Eid is celebrated after the month of Ramadan and the rally is celebrated to express the joy.

²⁸ This is the birthday celebration of Lord Krishna and this is a big festival for the Hindu community in the Bengal region.

²⁹ Also known as Ashura, is the tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar. This day is to commemorate the death of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad at the Battle of Karbala. Although this day is mainly of great relevance for the Shia Muslims, it is also commemorated in Bangladesh which is primarily a Sunni Muslim populated country.

³⁰ This means the worship program of the goddess Durga which continues for five days. It is the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community in the Bengal region.

³¹ Holi is a Hindu festival in the spring. It is known as the festival of color or festival of love.



Plate 24: Holi festival (left) and Durga Puja (right) in Shankhari Bazar and people enjoying the rally from their houses.

Source: Images from (left) Chakma (2014) and (right) Dey (2013).

Modern recreational facilities like amusement park, theme park, cineplex etc. are not available in old Dhaka. People must go to new Dhaka to enjoy such facilities. It is also unfortunate that the river Buriganga is not used and even not considered as a recreational place by the people of Dhaka. The river is polluted and only serves practical purposes like transport and communication. And thus, a huge potential recreational opportunity is lost.

In Shankhari Bazar, there is no public open space except the street. There is no other recreational facility in the area except two local cultural institutions.

4.3.5 Utility services

In addition to the problems with the existing congested urban development pattern and incompatible housing stock, utility services also contribute to the poor quality of living environment in old Dhaka. Urban utility services available in old Dhaka are aged, of poor quality and inadequate compared to the number of users. It is true that the services are inadequate, on the other hand, abuse of services is also not uncommon.

Water, gas and electricity are considered the basic utilities for urban area. At present all the infrastructures for utility services are owned, operated and maintained by public authorities, except power and telecommunication sector where both public and private agencies are involved. But in the introduction era of such services, they were provided on private initiative, mostly by the donation of honorable as well as rich people of the society as charity, even sometimes the services were free of charge for the users (Mamoon, 1993; Mamoon, 2009; Mazumder, 2003; Roy and Mazumder, 2003; Rahman, 2011). Especially the Nawab family members donated a lot of money for infrastructures. Water supply was established with major financial contribution and electricity supply, for street lighting, was established entirely with financial contribution from Nawab Sir Khwaja Abdul Ghani in 1877 and he donated on the condition that the residents must be waived from any additional tax for these services (Mazumder, 2003; Roy and Mazumder, 2003). Probably this free service has influenced the mind set up

of the residents which eventually has turned out to be an attitude that perceives utility services as public responsibility.

infrastructure in old Dhaka are inadequate and of poor quality. Considerable amount of infrastructure was laid in Pakistan period and some in the British period, and much of them have not upgraded ever. In the old city core the water supply system is quite old and sewerage system is not available in some areas. Even a few decades earlier, areas without sewerage network, waste management used to be performed manually by sweepers; this practice has been replaced now by the use of septic tanks. Shortage of gas, electricity and water supply is evident all over the city, but it is acute in old Dhaka.

Not all the housing stocks were built with the provision of piped water supply, instead there were provision of own well or tube well system or the residents were dependent partially or entirely to the public water supply established at different points. Residents also depended to the private suppliers named as *vistiowala* (Rahman, 2011). Therefore, to these housing stocks, water supply and sewerage system was later introduced but with difficulty and often inappropriate installation. It is the same way; electricity and gas supply were installed later in the housing stocks. In Shankhari Bazar some buildings still have their own well and water storage system. In some buildings, the gas supply has been installed in such a way that poses risk of explosion with slightest lack of care. This is also true for the power supply system



Plate 25: Utility services in Shankhari Bazar, a public water supply point in the street (left) a private well and tube well in a house (middle) and a gas stove installed in the 0.6m wide circulation corridor with staircase as common kitchen for 4 families on a floor of a 7 storied building.

Source: Author.

The primary problem with the utility services in old Dhaka lies with the quantity rather than the quality of infrastructure. The services are provided at inadequate quantity at the first place, and then it is used by many more times of users than it was designed for. It is quite understandable situation, when water is supplied for a 3 storied residential building which is converted to a 6 storied building and finally 30 families, 5 families at each floor with an average of 5 members, are utilizing the same water supply. This

examples are taken from Shankhari bazar, but in general applicable for the entire old city.

4.3.6 Traffic management

In Dhaka, traffic management is poor all over the city; in the inner city sometimes it reaches extreme condition. The main problem is the ever increasing number of vehicles while the amount of available road is almost static. Both motorized and non-motorized vehicles run on the same road which adds to congestion. In particular, motor vehicles playing the roads designed on pedestrian scale are the main reason of congestion. It is a very common scene in a narrow street of old Dhaka that there is a big jeep or a covered van and a static chain of rickshaws, hors carts, bullock carts and handcarts on either side with movement of just pedestrians. The following images can help to imagine the congestion.



Plate 26: (clockwise) Narrow crowded streets in old Dhaka, truck playing in a narrow lane, horse cart as a mode of public transport still pay in old Dhaka and a crowded node cramped with bus, rickshaw, car, three wheelers, motorbike and horse cart

Source: (clockwise) Ittefaq (2017), Laskar (2008), Chandan (2013) and author.

The congestion is more acute in the established bazar areas, in Nababpur, Islampur and Chawk Bazar for example, compared to the areas which are mainly residential, in Paridas Road, Gendaria and Narinda for example. In the bazar areas, there are no

established loading-unloading facilities, therefor loading and unloading are operated directly on the street which blocks the road and consequently generates congestion.

Another factor that generated congestion is construction or development work on the roads by public service providing authorities, for example water supply or telephone service etc. to provide or upgrade infrastructure facilities. This happens, surprisingly for some unknown reasons, mostly in the rainy season, the roads are dug for weeks, sometimes turned into canal or small pools, and then covered poorly and often without bituminous carpeting. And very often, just in few days or weeks the same road is dug again by another service provider agency. It is believed by the residents that the roads are dug as many times as there are service providers.



Plate 27: A local street named Becharam Deuri in old Dhaka dug in the rainy season in 2004 (left) and in 2016 (middle) the terrible condition of Moghbazar road due the construction of flyover (right)

Source: (left to right) Images taken from The Daily Star (2004b), Jasim (2016) and The Daily Star (2015b).

Recently, the construction work for the Malibagh-Moghbazar Flyover, which started in 2011, has partially blocked the Malibagh Road creating enormous volume of traffic congestion in the city core. It was the same situation with the construction of Mayor Md. Hanif flyover connecting Jatabari and Gulistan, however after the construction, traffic congestion has improved.

4.4 External factors

The political economy model of neighborhood change, which is often considered to be the most influential school of thought in the contemporary urban studies, emphasizes the role of external factors fostering urban decline (Pitkin, 2001). This model considers neighborhood change driven by economic relations and forces from outside the neighborhoods with emphasis on the social relations of production and accumulation. The model, based on neo-Marxian analysis of production, accumulation and space, assumes that fundamental changes in the urban structure, economy and larger political forces to determine the development course of neighborhoods.

Dhaka seems to support this theoretical proposition in a variety of ways. External factors, like urban development strategies, change in the regulation, property price etc.

appear to be the most dominating reasons that perpetuate the urban blight in some neighborhoods, particularly the inner city. The most important factors are as follows.

4.4.1 Property price

Serviced urban land is a scarce commodity. Rapid urbanization and extremely high urban growth in Dhaka have increased the demand of urban land. In fact, land speculation is considered to be the most profitable and risk-free business in current Dhaka.

Increase in land price also increases the exchange value of property in a particular neighborhood. Thus, land use changes to increase the available profit margin which may not necessarily comply with the existing land use in the neighborhood. Usually this takes the form of commercial and industrial use of residential land. Land price is also manipulated by interested groups, most often real estate business, urban elite etc., with their vested interest with land speculation. The most obvious effects of property price increase in Dhaka is discussed here.

Shrinking open space

Increasing price of land encourages utilizing un-built area in whatever way possible to increase the economic return. Public open spaces are most vulnerable for encroachment. DSCC and DNCC owns several public parks in the city but most of them are encroached and utilized in various ways. There are at least 54 public parks in the city, 13 of which in old Dhaka, however they admit the lost control over many of the parks, but the concerned department does not know exactly how many of them are currently available for public use and how many of them are encroached. An investigation by a local newspaper reported that most of the parks are encroached and surprisingly at least 10 parks have been replaced with a community center, kitchen market, mosque, rickshaw garage or truck parking lot, mostly by the city authorities (Alam, 2015). for example, Jatrabari park has shrunk to accommodate a public toilet, an office for the local ward commissioner and a road (Alam, 2011a), the narrow English Road park is being used as dumpsite (Alam, 2011c) and The Wonderland amusement park authority claimed the their park was demolished by RAJUK without any legal ground (The Daily Star, 2012g).



Plate 28: Built structures in the Jatrabari park (left) and dumping of construction debris in the narrow English Road park (right).

Source: (left) Alam (2011a) and (right) Alam (2011c).

Open space that belongs to individuals also suffers with increase in property price. Open space like garden or courtyards in the housing stocks are used for more housing units. Due to the absence of playground, children in the neighborhood very often utilize abandoned or unbuilt plots as their playground; and suddenly they find their playground is lost as construction works begins to add to the concrete jungle in the city. A number of such courtyard, garden, abandoned and unbuilt plots in the entire city have been built up in last two decades and the rate is accelerating. As an example, the K. M. Das Lane in the inner city could be mentioned, in the period of 2007-2012 at least 3 old houses with garden and courtyard and at least 4 unbuilt plots, including 2 big plots which served as a playground for the children in the neighborhood, have been built up and all of them now have high-rise residential buildings.

Deteriorating housing quality

With the increase in property price, land owners tend to build houses with maximum possible floor area. This results in violation of building code covering the entire plot with no or minimum set back, where the goal is to have more housing units and not to the quality of the housing units. Therefore, the recent constructions, particularly in old Dhaka, do not offer any better, or at least similar to the previous houses, quality of housing. They are smaller in size, outer walls are made thinner to save area, light and ventilation condition are given least consideration as windows are expensive than a solid brick wall and also requires exterior surface which eventually limits the total built up area. Newly constructed buildings in Shankhari Bazar exemplify this very well.

Slum proliferation

Increase in property price and the tendency of the owners to maximize rent encourages slum business. According to a study about the slums in Bangladesh (CUS et al., 2006) number of slums has been increased in Dhaka after the independence and the rate is alarmingly high since last two decades. The study also identified that almost 90% of

the slums are settled in privately owned land. Which clearly shows that slum is a private business.

Slum is a low investment and high profit business. Slum settlements earn enough financial return because of low investment in housing and great density if compared to conventional housing area. It is also an effective tool of land speculation. Investment is much less compared to the investment in land development and construction prior to sell in conventional real estate business. Moreover, property title is handed over when the land parcels or apartments are sold, but with slums the property title is still owned and the owner can wait without any significant investment until the price is high enough as desired, while earning profit in the meanwhile. Eviction of slum is not considered a big problem in slum business, if the residents are not willing to move and protest too much, the easiest and most practiced way is setting the slum on fire. Such incidents are not rare and has taken place several times, as found in the local newspapers (The Daily Star, 2010a; The Daily Star, 2010b; The Daily Star, 2011a; The Daily Star, 2012b; The Daily Star, 2012a). At least one individual land owner who have a slum settlement in the city admitted this in the interview.

Incompatible land use

Property price and rent is, generally more with commercial land use than residential. All the conversions from residential to commercial land use in the planned residential area are guided by the drive for profit maximization. The planned residential areas in the old city, namely Wari, Rankin Street, Larmini Street, Gendaria etc. has lost the pure residential character long ago. As, zoning restrictions are not strict in old Dhaka, the present trend is observed as to be conversion to industries or warehouses for hazardous products for smaller buildings and real estate business in favor of high-rise residential-cum-commercial complex instead of low-rise buildings. In the planned new Dhaka such conversion is purely profit lead, as some residents acknowledge.

Destruction of built heritage

Increasing property price directly aids demolition of built heritage. The booming real estate business has found its way in the city core with the inevitable allure of instant financial gain and long term security. In 5 years, from 2008 to 2012, at least 9 built heritages, including a 368years old mosque and a 160 years old library, have been demolished to make way for commercial or other projects in old Dhaka (Anam, 2011; Karim, 2007; Khan, 2011; Morshed, 2008; Rahman, 2007a; The Daily Star, 2011e; The Daily Star, 2012c). The recent examples include demolition of Kalachand Temple in Shankhari Bazar and Baro Bari in B K Das Lane in June, 2014 (Himadri, 2014 ; The Daily Star, 2014b). The latest demolition took place at plot 135 in Shankhari Bazar July, 2016 (Salam, 2016). This was a Mughal building, it housed a Temple of Shitala Devi at the

ground floor and the upper floor was abandoned during the last field work in 2014. Demolition took place in the conventional way, keep the front façade untouched and then suddenly the entire building disappears. All of these buildings were in the list of protected heritage buildings.



Plate 29: Demolished Kalachand Temple in Shankhari Bazar (left) and Baro Bari in B K Das Lane (right) in 2014.

source: (left) Himadri (2014) and (right) The Daily Star (2014b).



Plate 30: Ongoing demolition of a Mughal building at plot 135 in Shankhari Bazar (left) and the front façade still untouched (right) in July, 2016.

source: Salam (2016).

Crime and violence

Land being extremely valuable commodity, has a direct relationship with crime and violence related to land. Though violence related with land issues is not a recent invention, it is in practice for very long time. Nonetheless, in recent time, vandalism and violence induced by land encroachment has been extended by several times. In most cases people who are marginalized and weak in the wider social strata, for example poor, widows, ethnic minority people and small local institutions etc., are in the most vulnerable state to be victimized by such crime. This is again not just a Dhaka based urban phenomenon, rather wide spread across the country. Recent examples are found in Rajshahi (The Daily Star, 2012f), Cox's Bazar (Roy and Rahman, 2011), Nilphamari (Asaduzzaman, 2012), Dinajpur (The Daily Star, 2011b; The Daily Star, 2012e; The Daily Star, 2016d; The Daily Star, 2016c), Gaibandha (The Daily Star, 2011c; The Daily

Star, 2012d), Patuakhali (The Daily Star, 2010d; Hossain, 2015), Naogaon (Ali, 2010), Barisal town (Ghosh, 2012) old Dhaka (Habib and Adhikary, 2016) etc.

4.4.2 Zoning concept

Though mixed land use is traditional to South Asian urban settlement, the formal planning practice has opted for zoning concept for contemporary urban development very often. The urban area development as seen today is mostly guided and directed by the 1959 Master Plan for Dhaka. This master plan, although piecemeal in character, is regarded to reflect functional zoning of land use, (Mowla, 2007). After the independence, the main trend on urbanization is urban infill between the planned areas and two new projects named Purbachal and Jhilmil and the extension of Uttara 3rd phase have developed. Thus, it is observed that except only a few, the development trend after independence is mainly intensification and extension of unplanned residential settlements which can be seen from the next figure.

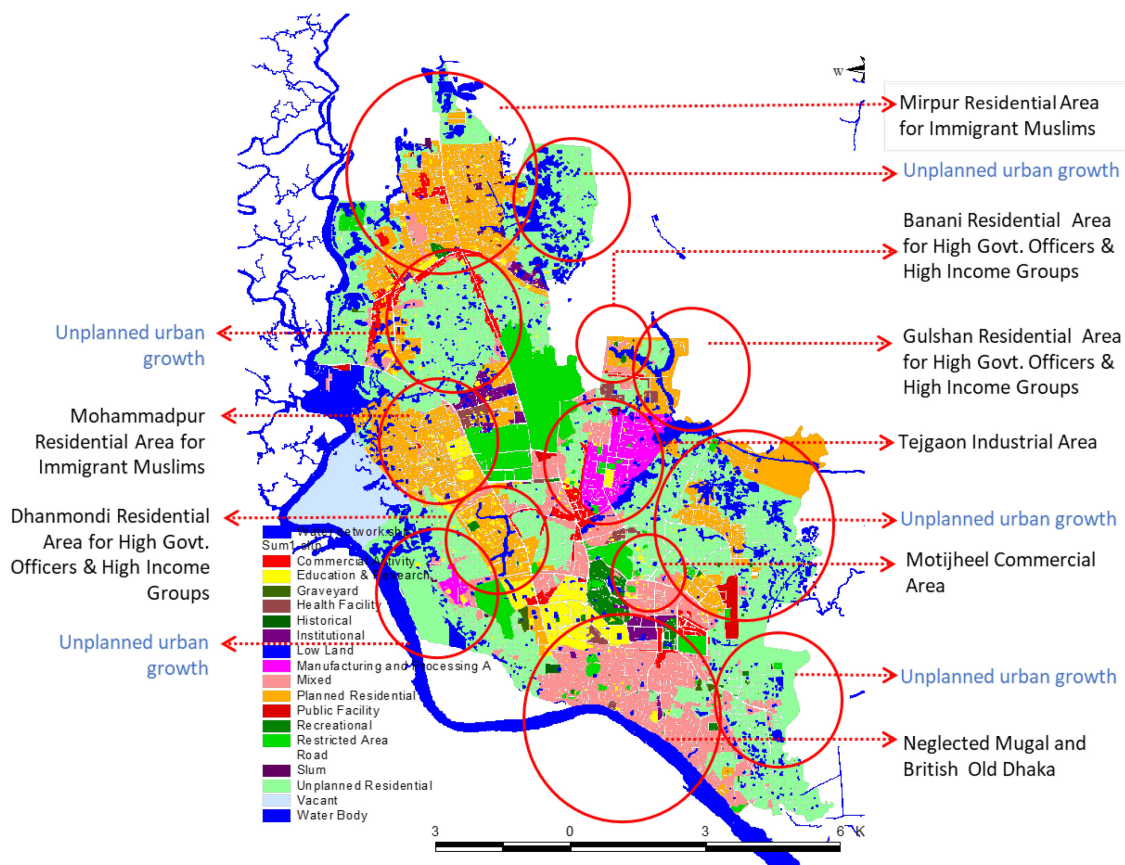


Figure 36: Map of Dhaka showing present day land use pattern. Blue texts represent land use developed after independence and black texts represent land use guided by the 1959 master plan.

Source: Modified from Taufique (2009).

Formally planned areas were designed with specific function, such as Motijheel-Dilkhusa and Kawran for commercial purpose as central business district, Tejgaon as industrial area, Dhanmondi, Azimpur, Gulshan, Banani, Mirpur areas as residential

neighborhoods and the New Market area in Azimpur was designed as shopping complex to serve the residential neighborhoods.

However almost all these areas have lost the purity of residential use, and in many areas, at least, in the plots along the main road has been declared as commercial plots and at a certain point the city authority accepted officially such commercial activities along the road in the residential areas. Plots along Mirpur Road, Sat Masjid Road in Dhanmondi area and the plots along Gulshan circle 1 and 2 can be mentioned in this regard.

The Town Planning and Development Control departments in RAJUK confirms that though it is not monitored and controlled with 100% accuracy and coverage but their intention is to follow the zoning principles as much as possible within their capacity in the planned areas. They have also mentioned that they will follow the zoning in the new developments of Purbachal and Jhilmil. However, these two departments also acknowledge presence of mixed land use in other areas of the city, particularly the intensive mixed use development in the inner city. The Town Planning, Development Control and the Detail Area Plan sections showed more interest in following zoning in planned areas rather in the inner city and unplanned areas.

This attitude indirectly encourages mixed use and intensive development in the inner city. Mixed land use per se is not responsible for deteriorating the living conditions; rather it provides life and vibrancy to the neighborhoods, though to many stakeholders this is an indicator of poor living condition and urban blight, as mentioned earlier. It is the problem when harmful land use finds its way to set in a neighborhood in the inner city which would not be possible in some other area due to zoning principles.

4.4.3 Building code

Dhaka Mahanagar Building (Construction, Development, Protection and Removal) Rule, 2008 regulate all kinds of building construction in the Dhaka Metropolitan area. The previous rule was, named Building Construction Rule, 1996, in practice until 2008 when the new rule was introduced. Prior to this, building constructions were regulated by the Bangladesh National Building Code, 1993.

A good number of the new buildings of Dhaka were built following the 1996 rule. This rule guided the building height according to the width of the facing road and required certain amount of setback space from the plot boundary depending on the plot size and building use type. The current 2008 rule guides building height according to the plot size and relaxes the previous setback regulation by replacing it with maximum possible ground coverage. Concerned architects in the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), planners in the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) and several practicing architects have opined that both of the building rules are based on the

conditions of new Dhaka and they are not suitable for old Dhaka and it is extremely difficult to design buildings in the small plots of old Dhaka following the current 2008 rule. Architects have also mentioned that the same floor area ratio for a low density with large plot area and high density with much smaller plot area is not logical and this opinion is also supported by the concerned officers in RAJUK. What happens in reality is that, residents are encouraged to build buildings without going through the proper procedure of design and RAJUK approval prior to construction. The consequence is illegal buildings and buildings that do not comply with the existing urban fabric and also the building code.

4.4.4 Public investment

Public sector investment is unevenly distributed across the city. It is not uncommon that the city authorities, rather than investment in the old urban settlements, opt for developing new urban areas with proper urban services. Interviewees in different public authorities mentioned that actually there is not set rules or written guidelines to determine the amount of public investment in different neighborhoods. Thus, public investment is decided in the meetings of the authorities following the Annual Development Plan (ADP) which is again guided by the corresponding 5-year plan. Therefore, there exists enough scope to maneuver the decisions by interested groups that are close to the decision makers leaving the entire process as a political one. In fact, some interviewees agreed that this decision making is entirely political and numbers of interested groups attempt to influence the decision, including the local Member(s) of Parliament (MP), political leaders, influential and rich inhabitants willing to join local politics in near future who find it as ground work to impress local population by showing some public investment as an outcome of their influence and urban elite group for example. Thus, public investment is not always utilized exactly for the neighborhoods' requirements decided by the residents, rather decided in a very much top down approach.

Public investment report for the DCC and RAJUK were not available to identify the discrepancies in public investment across the city. Some interviewees mentioned that Cantonment area including Defense Officers Housing Scheme (DOHS) areas, Baridhara, Dhanmondi, Banani and Gulshan are the areas that receive most of the public sector investment. These areas are the richest neighborhoods in the city and are envisaged as the areas that accommodates the decision makers. Area receiving least investment could not be identified with solid evidence such as a cadaster of investment profile of different areas, probably there are many. Undoubtedly the sweeper colonies, the Bihari camp (Geneva camp) area in Mohammadpur etc. belongs to this group. Also some very poor areas of the inner city like Islambagh, Shaheed Nagar, Amligola etc. for example do not appear to receive enough public investment.

4.4.5 Elitist planning approach lacking public participation

Although there were examples of urban planning in the early civilizations in this region like the Indus valley and later some of the planned Mughal cities, yet spatial planning in its institutional form is considered to be an imported ideology in South Asia. Spatial planning came along with the colonial rulers. In the Indian subcontinent, the British initiated the spatial planning in line of the British system, but of course modified to fulfil colonial extraction purpose. After independence, the same system has been continued. Thus, South Asian spatial planning system is heavily bureaucratic and elitist in nature. and of course Bangladesh is not an exception where it is influenced by local politics and very often used as political instrument which fosters uneven development across the city.

An exclusive agency for spatial planning in Dhaka was first established in 1956 named The 'Dhaka Improvement Trust' (DIT) under the Town Improvement Act, 1953. The DIT was replaced by RAJUK in 1987. Prior to the DIT there were several forms of municipality for Dhaka that cared for the physical development planning as well as providing services to the citizens. DCC provides a brief history of the municipal development in Dhaka. The first municipal organization was a Committee of Improvement established in 1823 which was replaced by the Dhaka Committee in 1840, an appointed committee by the Government. Dhaka Municipality was established in 1864 under the District Municipal Improvement Act, 1864 with the Dhaka Municipal Committee formed by government officers and this committee had the power to select municipal commissioners from the citizens but the number limited to be a maximum of seven. The next significant milestone was the Bengal Municipal Act of 1922. After the partition of India, the Dhaka Municipal Committee was superseded by the Pakistan government in 1947. The term of supersession was extended by annual orders on the score of non-preparation of electoral rolls, until 1953. And then the spatial planning responsibilities continued with DIT. In a nutshell, the spatial planning agency seems to always lack public representatives. Though the DCC is composed of elected public representatives, but it does not have planning and development control responsibilities.

Probably the long tradition of spatial planning being used as a political instrument in the colonial period helped in later time to continue the colonial legacy and let it be used, again, by the urban elites, to foster uneven development across the city. Another reason could be that, due to long history of colonial rule, the citizens have developed an anti-government mentality which continued even in the independent country as an anti-authority mentality and also often an anti-public mentality in the authorities in varying extent. Whatever the reasons are, there exists a perception among the citizens that the public authorities work in favor of rich and elite people and cares little about

the common people. On the other hand, the public authorities, all the service providers, spatial planning and other types consulted for this research, bear a perception that the general citizen have minimum knowledge about what should be done to improve the living condition. The authorities consider their own idea as the most effective and very often are not willing to compromise and coordinate even with other authorities that are integral parts of the development concern. The public authorities do not agree, however it is widely believed and even considered a historical pattern that they are concerned more with the urban elites' demand (Mamoon, 1993; Mamoon, 2009).

Public participation was hardly enthusiastically encouraged in the decision making for the welfare of the city in the early days of formal city planning (Roy and Mazumder, 2003). And still there is hardly any scope of public participation in spatial planning in its real sense. The Town Improvement Act, 1953 endows the RAJUK with the sole responsibility for planning and controlling the physical development of the city. The section 74 of this act requires public hearing of any master plan prepared by RAJUK. And thus, after the preparation of DAP, a public hearing for two months was carried out. Public hearing was conducted in the way that anyone could file a complaint against the proposal of DAP and the authority would revise the plan if they find the complaint is worthy for consideration; again this consideration is not obligatory, instead discretionary. This public hearing and consultations with the ward commissioners, some NGOs and citizen organization are the only scope of public participation applied in the preparation of DAP. However, the concerned departments in RAJUK agrees that the form of public participation adopted for DAP was not sufficient, in addition they also mention that there is not enough scope in the present regulatory system to introduce real public participation and they are concerned that applying true public participation is beyond their current human resource and financial capacity.

4.4.6 Perceived priority of urban development

Urban development is not, of course, the most important issue for the national government in developing countries. There are many other issues that get priority over urban development. For example, in Bangladesh food security is the most important issue and then come other issues like education, health, fuel, disaster management etc. when consulted, the Physical Infrastructure Division in the Planning Commission clearly mentioned that urban development is not the priority when planning for the country, not in the 5-year plan or in the Annual Development Plan (ADP) either. The comprehensive planning for the country is done under the guidance of the corresponding 5-year plan through the ADP which is again prepared with the requirements from different ministries following the demand by the ministers and local MPs. According the interviewee in the Planning Commission, food security is the most important sector, and then comes energy, education, health, infrastructure, natural

disaster etc. urban development is not in the least let alone urban blight in a few neighborhoods. A similar notion was observed when consulted with high ranked officers in different ministries, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW), Ministry of Industries (MoI), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Government & Cooperatives for example, and with members of some other institutions namely the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), for example. Interviewees from mass media and research institutes also mention the insignificance of urban development in the national context. Interviewees have mentioned that develop partners might have the same idea, nonetheless they are interested in urban issues like water and sanitation, urban poverty alleviation, health care and education for the urban poor, transport and traffic management etc. In a nutshell, urban development and eventually urban blight is perceived as not to urgent that requires immediate action compared to other crucial problems that are vital for the existence and welfare of this poor country. Therefore, budget required for proper urban development cannot be arranged leaving other more important and critical sectors.

4.4.7 Policy support

Like many other developing countries, there is lack of policy support both on national and city scale to secure urban development in a proper way in Bangladesh. In many cases policies relevant for urban development do not exist. Bangladesh is country heavily relying on agriculture and the geography is riverine with costal area on the south. Therefore, the national policy for land use which has been introduced just in 2001, named as The Land Use Policy, 2001, understandably, puts emphasis on the improvement and management of agricultural land; next comes water body, costal area and state owned land. The Land Use Policy, 2001 delegates all the responsibilities of urban development to the Town Improvement Act, 1953. The Town Improvement Act, 1953 primarily concentrates on the physical development with particular emphasis on regulation and management of buildings and the target area, in the time of introduction, that comprises the city of Dhaka and surrounding two other municipalities. Through several amendments, this act is now applicable for several urban areas in Bangladesh. The act describes the purpose as

*'make provision for the development, improvement and expansion'...
[of areas under its jurisdiction] by opening up congested areas, laying out
or altering streets, providing open spaces for purposes of ventilation or
recreation, demolishing or constructing buildings, acquiring land for the
said purposes and for the re-housing of persons displaced by the*

execution of improvement schemes, and otherwise as hereinafter appearing'

Building construction and housing development in the DCC area are regulated by The Dhaka Mahanagar Imarat Nirman Bidhimala³², 2008 and The Private Housing Project Land Development Rule, 2004 respectively. There is a national building code named as Bangladesh National Building Code, 2006, which was first introduced in 1993 with the same title, however this code is normative and concerned more with the quality of construction. The Dhaka Mahanagar Imarat Nirman Bidhimala, 2008 and Private Housing Project Land Development Rule, 2004 are criticized by urban professionals for not being suitable in the inner city and too ambitious for the city in respect of the existing density situation and population growth.

Conservation and protection of antiquities in the country are guided by The Antiquities Act, 1968. Following this act, there are only about 200 buildings in the entire Bangladesh that are identified as antiquities and protected. The department of Archeology is in charge of maintaining historical monuments and places under this act. Apart from this, in the city of Dhaka, 93 buildings and 13 streets are protected by the gazette named as The Preservation of Historical Buildings, Infrastructures, Important Locations, 2009 issued by RAJUK, however maintenance of these structures belong to the respective owners.

There is no national or regional policy yet for urbanization or urban land use control. At present, physical development of the DCC area is guided by the DAP which is criticized, also, by urban professionals and scholars for a number of discrepancies and lack of reality sense. And still there is no policy for improvement of distressed urban neighborhood.

The distressed urban neighborhoods, at least in the inner city of Dhaka, suffer from impoverishment and decline of business which are mostly informal and small scale manufacturing and service providing units. The Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP) puts almost all emphasis on rural poverty leaving the urban poor marginalized. The Industrial Policy, 2010 recognizes the importance of small scale and cottage industries in the national economy; however, implementation is far distant from what is mentioned in the policy. Moreover, there is lack of any policy to support the traditional businesses that are in vulnerable position, for example the cork-sheet craft, clay idol decoration material craft and conch shell craft in Shankhari Bazar.

³² It is a Bengali name which means Dhaka City Building Construction Code

4.4.8 Political willingness

Political willingness is vital for equity and implementation of spatial planning. Like many other developing countries in the world and following the colonial tradition, spatial planning still plays an important role in the political area and very often used as a political instrument in the Indian sub-continent (Mehra, 1991).

There have been many events in the spatial development field, in the national as well as city level, where lack of political willingness is observed as a hindrance to the success or even implementation of a development scheme. For example, the relocation of the tannery estate in Hazaribagh could be mentioned here. The leather industries in the inner city neighborhood of Hazaribagh are emitting severe environmental pollution and health risk for the workers as well as for the residents for decades. Relocation of the entire tannery industrial area is also an old proposal which is described by some residents of the area as being heard for generations. The Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Foundation mention that in the years of 2008-10 land has been prepared by the government in Savar, a location outside the city, which is suitable for the leather industries. But to 2016, the relocation has not taken place, and in the beginning of 2017 the government decided to go for hard line following the verdict of High Court to shut down the tanneries immediately (Shaon, 2017). Yet, till the mid of 2017 only 35% of the tanneries has been relocated to Savar (The Dhaka Tribune, 2017). The SME Foundation accuses the lack of willingness, from both sides of the industry owners and the public agencies responsible for the relocation project, to be the main reason for the failure. The leather industry owners of Hazaribagh area have their own association; and the association leaders, who are very often involved in the local politics, are not willing to move to the new location and they are making the delay in collaboration with some of the public agencies to whom the issue is an additional source of financial gain.

Great similarity is observed in the situation of small scale metal and light engineering industries in the areas of Dholaikhal-Tipu Sultan Road-Bangshal area of the old Dhaka. One of the top ranking leader of the owners' association claims that they want to move to a new area, which must be provided by the government, because they cannot expand their business in the congested old Dhaka neighborhood. Surprisingly he also mentions that they are not willing to leave their current position in the old Dhaka, which could be the much required breathing space for the congested neighborhoods, they are only willing to start additional units in the new location.

Removal of harmful chemical industries and warehouses show the same pattern. Specially after the Nimtali tragedy in 2010, there were movement and awareness from all the relevant actors in favor of cleaning up the residential neighborhoods. However, shortly after a surge of activities, everything went clam. Even the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) asked for relaxing the

activities by the government to clear combustible chemical industries and warehouses showing the excuse that the entrepreneurs need more time to comply with the regulations and such business are the source of livelihood for many poor people. The cleanup attempts are in coma stage now. Urban scholars have expressed their opinion that the cleanup attempt turned a failure because none of the stakeholders had true willingness for doing it; the entrepreneurs were not willing due to financial reasons which is also true for the building owners as the rent is much higher than residential tenancy, the institutions, like FBCCI, were not willing because they need the support of the entrepreneurs, and above all the government does not have the resources to continue inspection ignoring the protest by the entrepreneurs and others as well as rehabilitating them in another location as demanded by the entrepreneurs. It was also claimed in the local newspaper that the chemicals that caused the Nimtali fire were not in the list of the mobile court that deployed eviction of hazardous industries after the tragedy (Sarkar, 2010)

Promise to make improvement of neighborhood through physical and social infrastructures is a very popular and widely practiced political instrument, particularly in the electoral politics in this region (Mehra, 1991). Interestingly, it is also accepted by the residents that such promises are only seasonal and they will not be fulfilled. Therefore, the game goes on; the residents keep complaining, but never really make a real refusal to the politicians in the next election which keeps the game running.

4.5 Chapter conclusion

Urban blight, in this research, in the context of south Asia has been considered as poor quality of life in a neighborhood. As it is observed in the general context of south Asia that there are certain issues that make patterns, and very often such patterns differ from the patterns in the industrialized Euro-American cities. Physical attributes and perception of urban blight seem to have distinguished character in case of Dhaka which is, again, not very different from the south Asian framework.

When considered the quality of life, urban blight seems mostly physical in nature and mostly associated with built environment and lack of urban services compared to the population. Obviously poverty is also there, however it is not likely that poverty is just confined within the inner city rather wide spread and other poor neighborhoods also suffer from similar problems. Another feature is that social segregation is not associated with inner city urban blight. On the contrary inner city residents receive appreciation and recognition of their social cohesion and bonding in the society. Another issue needs careful consideration is the perception of urban blight. It is observed that in many aspects what is perceived as blight by urban professionals, activists, authorities and elites, is not considered a problem by the residents of that blighted neighborhood.

These general observations are applicable also in the neighborhood of Shankhari Bazar. The involvement of religious identity in the urban affairs could not be confirmed, rather remain unclear and doubtful which marks that probably some relevance is there. However, detail investigation to reveal the relation of religion and urban affairs is beyond the scope of this research.

5 Chapter 5: Addressing urban blight in Dhaka

Urban blight is not widely recognized as a problem, and, to more limited extent, as a problem that requires immediate action in the south Asian region, whereas in some other realities, European and north American cities as well as recent experience from east Asian cities also for example, it might not always be the consideration for immediate action, but at least it is a recognized problem. Following the tradition, Dhaka doesn't have many efforts to address urban blight under a holistic program, but fortunately there are some isolated efforts. This chapter discusses the efforts taken by different stakeholders to address urban blight to varying extent and thus, answers the second research question that investigates how urban blight is addressed.

The term urban renewal has different meaning to different groups of stakeholders and therefore; not all the efforts discussed are not considered as urban renewal by the concerned actors. Again at least to date, there exist no official program termed as urban renewal or similar name. As mentioned earlier, in this research urban renewal indicates efforts to improve the quality of life in a blighted neighborhood, thus, all similar efforts are considered for this study. Such efforts ranges from individual resident's attempt to improve his aging building to the spatial planning agency's attempts of upgrading the neighborhoods in the inner city.

From the previous chapter, it becomes clear that there are varieties of reasons that contribute to set urban blight. Then the next step becomes identifying how urban blight is addressed by different stakeholders and what is addressed, the underlying reasons or simply the visible and perceived impacts of urban blight. This research attempts to investigate the actions are taken by different stakeholders in general and particularly in the areas that are identified, both by the previous section and according to the stakeholder' perception, as worthy of intervention to counteract urban blight. These areas of intervention include, but of course not limited to, physical and social environment, urban services, housing stock, urban poverty, conservation and economic condition of the residents. Different actors are categorized in four groups for convenience according to their relation with the blighted neighborhood.

Individual actors are residents living in the neighborhood and the discussion is about their actions and strategies to improve the neighborhood situation as well as their personal improvement.

Neighborhood level actions are considered collective efforts to fight against urban blight. Activities of the local community based organizations are considered in this section.

City level actions are those taken by different state authorities. This is a very important section, as most of the causes of urban blight falls under the responsibility of the city authorities in the local context. Different authorities ranging from spatial planning to the agency responsible for cottage industries fall in this category and their activities are discussed in this section.

External actors are considered those who are outside the three other groups but have role and can play a role in addressing urban blight. Non-government organizations (NGO), urban activists, scholars and development partners fall under this category.

5.1 Actions by individual residents

According to the sub-cultural model of neighborhood change, it is considered that urban blight is not inevitable. The residents can successfully resist urban blight to set in or diminish the effects of urban blight. Thus, individual resident's consideration and actions are important to counter urban blight in neighborhoods along with other steps. This section discusses the individual residents action to counter urban blight mainly the study area of Shankhari Bazar but includes observations from other inner city neighborhoods. A common logic presented by most of the interviewees in Shankhari Bazar that they are deprived on ethnic consideration and they attempted to justify their actions, which includes mostly doing nothing, on this ethnic issue. Their actions on different issues are discussed as follows.

5.1.1 Concern about physical environment and urban services

Residents are concerned about the physical environment and urban services in different ways. Some of them are concerned about the quality and deterioration while others simply do not care about it and consider it as granted or their fate. In the first place, there was not much reaction about the physical environment and urban services except the water supply. This could be an indication of how the residents accept the state of physical environment as a part of their life style. The academia also mentioned this fact that the messiness of everyday social and business life is considered a part of the traditional lifestyle in the inner city and for those who are outsiders, it is quite shocking. In the interviews and group discussions, their concern about this problem was revealed after a while of discussion. However, there was minimum response about taking any individual action resulted from the concerns.

Physical environment of the street, the only available public space, is considered of poor quality by the residents. They describe it as full of problems, such as uncollected and scattered wastes, poor maintenance of the road, jungles of wires hanging from the light post and other service posts and also dangerous connection (probably not all the connections are legal) to the buildings, open drains which are hardly maintained,

incredible traffic in the narrow road etc. to name a few. However, though the residents complain, it appeared that they contribute to the problems they mention generously. Some examples can be given; it is a very common complaint about the poor waste management. It is true that Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), the municipality, does not offer an efficient waste management for the city dwellers. But there was no indication observed, at least during the field work period³³, that the residents are aware and cautious about their actions about the waste. Household wastes are thrown in regular intervals, usually after each 4/5 buildings and specially where there is a street light post, street vendors who sell flower or fish or vegetables dump their waste directly on the street beside their stall, tea stalls and restaurants dump the waste water into the drain and other kitchen rubbish on the street. During the data collection, at least two vendors were observed while selling turtles on the street and one of them was interviewed; he prepared the turtles for the customers and dumped the waste in the street and into the drain. When asked why he did so as there is already a DCC waste collection bin approximately 100 meters away, he said that he did so because everyone else does the same and the bin is too far away. Not only vendors, households provided the same answer. The street is only 350 meters long and the waste collection bin is placed in one end. The following images can provide a hint of the messiness of the area.



Plate 31: Cleaning worker collecting garbage in the hand cart from the street (left) and the general dirty street environment in Shankhari Bazar (middle and right).

Source: Author.

³³ July-August, 2011, June-July, 2012 and August-September 2014



Plate 32: and street vendors selling flowers (left) and turtles (middle and right) and dumping their waste directly on the street.

Source: Author.

Physical environment in the privately owned places, that mean inside the private housing areas is not always nice, rather very often poorly maintained and dirty. Only a few household areas, which were visited the inner courtyards were clean and well maintained. It was awkward to ask directly why they do not clean the courtyards. A clear association of property ownership dispute and poor quality of the courtyards was observed, as depicted in the next images. This is discussed in detail in the next section.



Plate 33: Garbage dumped in an unused (left) and used (right) rare courtyard. The used courtyard belongs to a building declared as vested property.

Source: Author.

Concern about the urban services also appeared to be limited to complaints. Shortage of urban services, water, gas, power etc. for example, is not just an inner city problem, rather it is a citywide and sometimes, for the power sector to name, a national crisis. However, some problems, like water and sanitation, is really in sever state in the inner city. The residents mention the scarcity and poor quality of services particularly water and sanitation system as their concern. It is an interesting observation that they are aware of the urban service situation in the entire city, but they are only considering their neighborhood as deprived and additionally setting the ethnic identity as the prime cause of deprivation. Moreover, very few residents were willing to bear additional cost

for better services. The most common response was, as they are poor it is the government that should take care of the urban services.

In addition to water supply to the houses, there are public water supply points at both ends of the street. But the available services are quite inadequate for the population living there and this is also admitted by the service providers, DCC and RAJUK. The street is the border line of two wards of DCC, the northern side belongs to ward 72 and the southern to 73. This causes difficulties in determining the responsibility of maintenance and development works.

As mentioned in the previous chapter (see 4.3.5), in the early days of setting such services for the city, the city dwellers enjoyed the services, in many cases, for free (Mamoon, 1993; Mamoon, 2009; Mazumder, 2003; Roy and Mazumder, 2003; Rahman, 2011). Probably, this free service made influenced the attitude of the residents towards utility products. Free services were not valued and misused and the residents were not willing to pay when tax was levied for such services. This might be the root why still some of the residents, all over the city not just in old Dhaka, are reluctant or unwilling to pay for utilities and consider the services as public responsibility.

There is scarcity of urban services in old Dhaka. But no documented evidence could be found to support the residents' claim of deprivation on ethnic ground.

5.1.2 Improvement of housing stocks

The state of housing stocks is described in the previous chapter in detail (see 4.3.1) and it is clear that the existing housing stocks do not offer healthy living environment for the residents. Investment for improving the housing quality is a critical issue for the residents and it is directly influenced by the unsolved property ownership problem.

While discussing this issue, it is also necessary to know the current regulations for building construction works in old Dhaka. RAJUK controls the development works around the city of Dhaka. In 2009, primarily in response to the movements by urban activists to save the historical buildings from demolition, a gazette has been published. In this gazette RAJUK has identified 93 built structures and 13 streets for their historical and social worth and earmarked them for conservation and has prohibited any kind of, either complete or partial, removal or reconstruction or addition or change or modification to the existing built structures without the permission of the concerned authority. This gazette is legally binding for the owners and users, regardless of the ownership status as individual or public/private agency, of the identified 93 buildings and all built forms along the 13 streets. Shankhari Bazar and adjacent Tanti Bazar and Pannitola are in this list.

Consequently, the owners of the buildings are not allowed to make any changes to the buildings without the permission of the authority. The residents of Shankhari Bazar do not like it (Islam, 2013). In several interviews and group discussions, the residents, especially those who own property, have showed serious aversion for this gazette. They consider the act of going for a permission to the authority, for making modification of the existing buildings, as ineffective efforts because the bureaucratic procedures are too much complicated, time consuming and according to the residents nothing works there without bribes. However, it was also identified from the discussions with the residents that, in fact very few of the house owners were interested to invest in the buildings to improve the existing condition; their primary interest is for redevelopment which is not possible under the current regulations. This is also a reason that contributes to the aversion towards the regulation. Some of the interviewees clearly mentioned that they are not willing to invest in the buildings as it would be simply waste of money, the conditions are so poor that they will opt only for redevelopment. Their claim appears to have ground as some buildings, especially those for which the owners mentioned the argument of redevelopment, were found to be in very poor conditions, at least one was abandoned and only the street front shop was in use, some buildings were found to be in vulnerable condition and at the risk of collapse. Collapse of building has also occurred, after an old 6 storied building collapsed claiming 19 lives in 2004 (Khan, 2004; The Daily Star, 2004a; Roy, 2004; The Daily Star, 2004c) and out of 142 buildings, 91 buildings have been found to be risky and 32 as extremely vulnerable (Roy and Morshed, 2011).

It is too expensive for the individual owners to preserve the buildings and make necessary modifications keeping the old structure in place and the residents are not willing to do that on their own. Before 2009, there was somewhat a different practice by the home owners. Some of the researchers who have worked in this area have mentioned that, at times RAJUK and DCC mentioned about demolition of old and vulnerable buildings in the city and as a response, the house owners in Shankhari Bazar had treated just the front facade so that they do not look so old, some interviewees also mentioned this practice.

According to the residents, the current situation offers two options for them, either ignoring the regulations and opt for redevelopment or wait until the building collapse and then rebuilt without, or may be with, violating the regulations. Both options are found in practice. Some of the property owners do not care about the regulations and they build new buildings either by complete demolition or keeping the front portion of the buildings intact followed by redevelopment of the rear portion. Partial demolition is seen in the buildings of holding number 97, 93, 81, 80, 79 and 55, all of these buildings have the old structure in the front, but the rear portion is replaced by 3-7

storied new buildings. The local newspaper reports of new building construction in holding number 18, 19, 91 and 90 in 2012 (Hossain, 2012). During the field work in 2012 which was conducted before the newspaper reported in the issue, holding number 18 was found to be an incomplete 2 storied building, 19 as a single storied, 91 was a 6 storied recently constructed building and 90 was a single storied structure. The building in the holding number 81 collapsed in 2004 and has remained un-built so far. The following images show new constructions with old structures in the front or in adjacent plots.



Plate 34: Two newly constructed buildings with an old one in the middle plot (left and middle one taken from roof of the new building), similar situation but the middle plot has also a new building in the rare side leaving the front side (right).

Source: (left) Hossain (2012) and author (middle and right).

Another problem arises for investment in the buildings from the unsolved property ownership. For those who claims ownership of properties listed as vested property, the choice is clear, they are not investing in the building because they do not have any right to the property and they consider investment as waste of money without any security of tenure. For those, who share the property with others, usually nearer or distant relatives, it is a matter of decision, responsibility and share of total investment. In most cases, co-sharers cannot or do not agree on a consensus about the decision of investment, responsibility of the common facilities and proportion of share of the total investment. These result in minimum or, usually, no investment in the building to improve the living condition.

Investment in the housing is considered sole responsibility of the house owners in the context of Dhaka as well as in the South Asian region. Therefore, tenants never invest, nor even consider it as an option, to improve the living environment. Shankhari bazar has a specific tenant group, only the Hindu community. And due to limited supply, the demand is very high and consequently an assured income secured by extremely high

rent. Most of the housing stocks offer a single room apartment with shared kitchen and toilets. The rent is approximately Taka 8500 to 10000, which makes approximately € 100 to 120³⁴, per 10 m² with shared facilities and the tenant must provide an advance equivalent to the rent of 6 months to 2 years. Therefore, for the house owners as the rent is very high and they are making enough money without any investment, there seems to be no urgency of improvement.

Lack of resources is obviously a reason that blocks or curtails investment in the buildings even if someone is interested. Due to constraints on the household income, fields of expenditures must be selected carefully and, in general, for all the residents in the area, probably investment in housing is not a priority; business, health, education of children etc. are named by the residents as the priority sector for investment. Housing loan is available from public or private sector organizations, but the target group is primarily higher income people and the residents of Shankhari Bazar are unable to avail that and probably also unwilling to try for other options.

Some of the residents also find an ethnic discrimination, which seems to be an explanation for everything, behind the regulation protecting buildings. Their argument is, because this is a minority populated area, so the government do discourage development there and that's why though there are plenty of historic buildings in the city, only the minority populated areas are declared as 'heritage' to keep the population deprived of a better living condition. They showed disregards specifically for two English words 'urban' and 'heritage', probably due to the campaign against heritage building demolition and as such activities are widely framed as urban movement. Besides, the property ownership is also critical and again considered as a tool of discrimination against the Hindu community. The allegation against building and area conservation does not have any solid evidence. Among the 93 buildings there are historical buildings and temples that belongs, or historically belonged, to the Hindu community. Among the 13 streets declared for conservation, 9 were historically Hindu populated area and at present only 3 are primarily or purely Hindu populated area. However, this information does not prove the allegation, as there has been drastic change in the demographic pattern in the city in the course of history and the areas has been declared for conservation considering the historical value of the built structures which were built by the members of the Hindu community who were the majority of the affluent class of then Dhaka. But, the property ownership dispute in particular the problems with the Vested/Enemy Property are considered as discriminating tool against the Hindu community by most of the relevant actors.

³⁴ Taka is the local currency. Approximately 1€ = 85 Taka in 2015

Individual response for the improvement of housing stock seems to be limited to complaining and taking no real action. It seems, as some house owners have mentioned and some had indicated, the main target is to make new buildings, demolishing the existing ones, but without any real improvement of the living condition. Though improvement of living condition is the main argument from the house owners' side, but visiting the recently constructed buildings, it is clear that the new 6-8 storied buildings have simply replaced the old 3-4 storied buildings but not improved the living condition considerably except for new brick masonry and sometimes a little bit wider stair case. Even sometimes, the new buildings are worse in the sense that in the old ones at there were some rare courts which are built up to make more rentable apartments in the new one, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter. It seems that the main target is to earn more money by making more rentable units with possible least investment. Due to the existing regulations, large scale demolition of buildings is not taking place in Shankhari Bazar, but it is quite common in other areas of the city core. This tendency is mentioned in the growth machine theory that explains how the tendency of profit maximization from rent affects neighborhood quality.

5.1.3 Concern about social environment

Residents are quiet responsive about the social environment in Shankhari Bazar, and the ethnicity plays a big role here. Not only by the residents; the social environment with specific reference to the ethnic flavor is addressed by all the stakeholders from different perspectives.

The residents consider that the social environment is improving and at present far better compared to the early periods of independence. They endow all the credits to education and specifically women education. Data on the educational status of the residents could not be collected due to time constraints; therefore, it was not possible to check the particulars on Shankhari bazar, but obviously the literacy rate in the country has been increased considerably in last two decades³⁵. Almost all the interviewees mentioned this progress in education and also they mention their desire for higher education for their children as far as they can afford. The residents also mentioned their concern about various traditional practices that they discourage at present like early marriage, too many children and dowry for example. Consciousness about health and hygiene has also risen which is evident, as mentioned by the interviewees, in decreasing number of mother and child death and morbidity.

³⁵ Adult literacy rate in Bangladesh has been increased from 30% in 1980 to 60% in 2014. And adult female literacy rate shows a very sharp increase from 25% to 85% in the same time frame. (See <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/bangladesh/literacy-rate>).

Ethnic culture puts an additional flavor, in Shankhari Bazar, to the rich social culture of the city core. This street still contains and celebrates the traditional lifestyle of the Hindu community and their religious festivals which is almost extinct from other parts of the city. According to the residents, this religious culture is the center of their life there and for many of them this is the only reason for living in this area. They mention that they feel 'free' in this area about their religious identity and daily activities. To explain what they mean by 'feeling free' they described obstacles, teasing and even threats from neighbor in other neighborhoods of the city. Concentration of Hindu population in this area also offers a sense of security to them. Cases were there when families, particularly with young girls in the family, have migrated here from different parts of the country due to security reason; they simply did not feel safe in their home surrounded by Muslim neighbors. Despite the colloquial claims of communal peace, there are numerous reported cases, at least, in the local newspapers, as documented research in this particular issue is extremely rare, of aggression and atrocity against minority population and it can be said that there has been a long and continuing trend of attack of various degree on the Hindu population by the Muslim people including neighbors in different occasions.

Whatever happens, residents are united and determined to protect the social environment here, said some elderly interviewees. By social environment, they mean ethnic solidarity. Other than the ethnic issues, the residents seem to be active in the social and cultural affairs also. There are a few practicing cultural organizations in the area, Pratidwandi Club for example, there is also at least one cultural learning center for children where they can learn music, dance, painting etc. and the residents send their children happily.

Some negative aspects are cited by some members of the community in Shankhari Bazar, increasing drug abuse by the young generation is the most critical issue, among others problems lacking sense of belongingness to the area, decreasing social bonding, decreasing sense of honor for the elderly etc. are mentioned.

5.1.4 Improvement of economic strength and business environment

For majority of the residents, improvement of the economic capacity is the primary concern and for those who earn their livelihood from business, it is the most important issue. Exact number of business in the area or the number of household that are dependent on business directly or indirectly could not be identified. Most of the residents, who were interviewed, believe that whoever own some property here are involved in business and usually tenants are more involved in services oriented jobs.

Improvement of business environment is not within the capacity of only the entrepreneurs. A variety of factors are involved here. What these entrepreneurs do, is

try as far as they can to run the business well. Except a few, all the business in the street are related to the Hindu religion in some way, therefore they have a specific group of customers. There were lots of complaints about the business environment, but they are mostly out of their control and this is eventually admitted by the entrepreneurs. On the other hand, only a few entrepreneurs declared that their business is going well and so do the business in general of the whole area. Some artisans who work in the conch shell industry complained that there is nothing wrong with the conch shell business and it is thriving at the cost of the artisans' benefit. They clarified that entrepreneurs do not provide necessary facilities for the workers and pay them much low for their work. This claim might not be true for all the conch shell industries there, but for some. Some of original settlers and elderly members of the community said that the overall business is thriving, as this is the only supplier of the products relevant in Hindu rituals for the entire city and this sounds logical, but it is a common tendency of the entrepreneurs not to admit that.



Plate 35: Working environment in a clay idol workshop (left) and in a conch shell workshop showing the only window at the rare side of the narrow room (middle) and a stone craft worker works in the street just beside a garbage dump due to lack of space inside the shop (right)

Source: Author.

In response to the question on investment in business, there was somewhat reluctance in the entrepreneurs' attitude. It seems that they are not really willing to take the risk of investment without certainly knowing the future. But there was a common consensus in the demand that they deserve financial contribution or at least loan at low interest from public sector and other facilities like import duty waiver on the imported raw materials, conch shell for example, marketization of their products etc. In terms of maximizing the efficiency of business, the entrepreneurs are creative and hard working. They try to utilize all their capacities, maximum possible space utilization, employment of family labor, doing additional seasonal business etc. for example.

Relevance of religion in the business is perceived as a difficulty by some of the entrepreneurs and they demand marketing of their products, like conch shell bangles,

metal and cork-sheet crafts etc., as traditional cultural products, not as religious products. On the other hand, some entrepreneurs believe that this exclusivity of their business could be their strength, however such entrepreneurs are extremely few in number.

5.1.5 Concern about the social worth and welfare of the neighborhood

In general, the residents seem to be informed of the social worth of the area, at least in terms of cultural and historical value of the area and their traditional lifestyle. This has happened probably due to campaign and activities by several urban activists, the Urban Study Group (USG) is a prominent NGO in this group. Also the conch shell industry is well-known in the society and a popular topic of media reports and undergraduate study courses for seminar or term paper etc. Therefore, the community is familiar with media exposure, foreign tourists, students collecting information etc. and they every time mention the social, cultural and historical value of the neighborhood to the community. However, the residents concern about the social worth and welfare of the neighborhood is not as simple as knowing it.

Though the residents seem to be informed about the social worth of the area, not all of them appear to be concerned about it and consider it a tool for fighting urban blight. On the contrary most of the interviewees showed negligence followed by their frustration that the social worth does not make any improvement in their life or livelihood. In fact it was really difficult to face situations, during the field work, like an artisan questioning if the historical value of the area will help to increase his wage or his interview can get him some extra income to buy bread or an elderly complaining that all the researches are meaningless for them and so is the social worth of the area; they do not get any real benefit from the social worth it is simply a topic for the rich outsiders who do not live in the misery in which they are forced to live in the name of urban heritage.

On the other hand, a few numbers of interviewees were concerned about the social worth of the area and argued that this area needs to be protected. However, they endow the responsibility to the government and finds it is beyond their capacity to do anything. In this small group, there was an even smaller group who found some exchange value of the social worth; they argued that this are needs to be preserved and for doing that the residents must get an exchange of plots or apartments in any of the public housing projects.

Therefore, it comes out that, individual responses concerning welfare and the social worth of area are almost negligible. Although the residents are informed about the social worth, but probably they are more interested in material gain that can directly help in making the livelihood rather than an abstract concept or philosophical ideology.

Nonetheless, at least concerning the religious 'freedom', as identified by the residents, they enjoy are highly appreciated and their perception of welfare of the community mostly revolves around it.

5.1.6 Leaving the neighborhood

Leaving the neighborhood is also considered as an option for some residents. People leave the neighborhood for a variety of reasons, but when it counts for the deteriorating quality of the neighborhood then a range of factors play their role. In most cases, as mentioned by some interviewees including urban professionals, activists, researchers and some residents, when people find the neighborhood quality is going down and it is not being taken care of, and they themselves also are not either involved or willing to get involved in any attempts to improve the neighborhood quality and provided that they can afford to leave the area, people move to other neighborhoods.

Khatun (2003) has done a detail study about the out migration of the early settlers of Dhaka, who are called *dhakaiya*³⁶ people, from the old Dhaka to new Dhaka and other parts of the city. She mentioned that almost three quarters of the movers had complaints against the neighborhood environment, both physical and social, and the residents find the neighborhood 'dreadful', 'too dirty and unhygienic', there are 'unpleasant people and anti-social element' and 'most of the people are either illiterate or have low level of education'. She argues that the *dhakaiya* movers give high importance to the neighborhood environment and as the inner city neighborhood environment is 'dreadful' according to their perception, they move to other neighborhoods with good environment. Beside the environment, poor quality of physical infrastructures, poor accessibility and congested urban pattern etc. are also regarded as sever drawback of the inner city neighborhoods which offer them leaving the neighborhood as a way to get rid of this problems. Khatun (2003) has not discussed the events of migration on the context of urban blight, her study is based on out migration only. However, it provides a good overview of the considerations of the migrants about the quality of life in the inner city.

When discussed with the residents in Shankhari Bazar, in the personal interviews as well as in group discussions also, many of them mentioned that if possible they would leave the area. The willingness to leave the area is related with various aspects, financial capability, occupation, educational status, family composition and background, place of origin, status in the land tenure system etc. for example. The general tendency, as observed following the interviewees opinion, is that residents with higher educational qualification and stronger economic capability are willing to move or have already

³⁶ Khatun (2003) considers those as *dhakaiya* who own inherited land in old dhaka as recorded in the cadastral map of 1912.

moved to other areas because they do not like the physical environment in Shankhari Bazar. Again, residents who own business here are less likely to move than those who have their occupation on other sector like service etc. There was also another group of residents who wants to leave the area but as they cannot afford to do it yet, they are compelled to live here. The common allegation from all the residents was same, Shankhari Bazar offers poor quality of housing, urban services and the physical environment, however there was almost no complaint about the social environment except the recent rise of youth drug addiction and lack of educated people. Nevertheless, when asked what action are taken or considered by the residents to improve the housing and the physical environment, the answers are already discussed in previous section. The residents are not really willing to take individual initiative to improve the situation in the neighborhood. They perceive it as public responsibility.

5.1.7 Varying interests of individual residents

Different residents have different vision about the improvement of the area and also have different expectations and interest on the improvement. Apparently, there is a relation between the individual interest and the improvement of the area and consequent action they undertake on one hand, and again between the individual interest and the individual's association with the land on the other hand. Therefore, for the ease of discussion, the residents' interests are discussed according to their status in the land tenure system.

Status of the residents in the land tenure system of Shankhari Bazar is quite complicated. Yet it can be simplified in six categories,

1. Land owner with clearer property title and ownership of the building.
2. Co-sharers who own some parts of the property and occupy their parts.
3. Tenants who pay the rent to the land owner or co-sharers.
4. Tenants and occupants of vested properties who pay the rent to the government.
5. Occupants of vested properties who do not pay any rent.
6. Illegal occupants who do not pay any rent.

The tenants and occupants with unclear legal status consider themselves as property owners. Thus, in broader sense, there are two categories; property owners and tenants.

In workshops with the residents, they provided their opinion on the development of the areas. The residents consider tenants to constitute the majority of the population and responsible for deterioration of social and physical environment of the area. Tenant group showed little interest in urban renewal and the owner group showed more

concern about development of their business and urban renewal only to improve the built environment.

However, the information derived from individual interviews, group discussions and workshops with the residents reflect different observations than direct opinions by the residents. Tenants are not likely to constitute the majority of the population; rather the co-sharers, they always belong to the same family tree, seem to be more than the tenants. Land owners who own the entire property or major portion are very small in percentage. Thus, majority of the residents have some property here. Possession of property is a vital and usually no one leaves their property vacant even for a short period. Illegal occupation is very negligible in number and they are very local or even from the family members or relatives. Different groups of residents are observed to have clear inclinations towards different interests in the physical development of the area and urban renewal is considered a vehicle for that. Development of the quality of life and social mobilization are of minimum concern and, interestingly, only addressed by women; most probably because women are more concerned with the future of their children than the current business or living environment.

Tenants seem to have little interest in physical development and urban renewal projects for the area. Their prime concern is to keep the rent as low as possible and improvement of the housing quality without any increase in the rent. They have minimum concern about the social worth of the area and any kind of urban renewal there.

Almost all of those who own some property, whether land owners or co-sharers, also own some business. Though the prime concern is the development of business, the property owners, both groups, have real interest in the physical development of the area in different directions. Co-sharers are not united to take any decision about the development of their property, which leads them towards a stand that demands for better urban services. Land owners also ask for better urban services but their primary interest is in real estate development. Those who are aware about the social worth of Shankhari Bazar are interested in exchange of land parcel. This particular interest demands explanation. Following detail discussion, it is revealed that some people demand that as this place has unique cultural value in the city and the people are poor, marginalized and heavily distressed during the liberation war in 1971, therefore, they deserve special compensation from the public sector. This compensation should take the form of property swap. As the residents of Shankhari Bazar are united and wish to live together in the same place, so the government should provide them bigger parcels of land in any of the public housing scheme, Jhilmil³⁷ housing area was suggested, and then their present land might be acquired by the government. About this particular

³⁷ Jhilmil Residential Area is a residential housing project developed in Keraniganj which is located on the other side of the river Buriganga by RAJUK as a suburb of Dhaka.

demand it is observed that this is a quite common demand by many groups. Whenever a question arises that some particular groups need support or incentive or removal from the present location etc. they demand for land either in government owned land or arranged by the government. Such demand is also claimed by the entrepreneurs of different sectors as discussed in the previous chapter (see 4.4.8). Probably as land is the most precious belonging in this small, overpopulated and land scarce country³⁸, therefore everyone tries to get land provided the public sector because it is available at much lower price than the market value and the land title issues are clear.

Occupants of vested property who are the rightful inheritor are primarily interested in getting the title of their property, and next comes other issues. Illegal occupants and those who occupy vested property are certain about the problem of legal status. Their interest is to maximize the profit out of the occupied or leased property.

5.2 Actions in the neighborhood scale

Collective efforts from the neighborhood to combat urban blight are described in this section. Here, collective efforts are considered those efforts organized or initiated by the local community based organizations (CBO). The Shankhari Bazar Nagorik Committee, locally known as Nagorik Committee, is considered the neighborhood representative in this study which is a strong and influential local CBO and performing since the 70s. The local leaders mentioned that there was a *Panchayet*³⁹ formed for the *Mahalla*⁴⁰ in the 90s, but it was not fruitful and the Nagorik Committee continues to serve as the neighborhood representative. Besides this, there are several local religious institutions in the form of different *Mandir* Committee which means temple committee that are also accepted in the social affairs by the community. However, in most cases neighborhood is represented by the Nagorik Committee and the religious organizations mostly get themselves confined in the religious domain and rarely get involved in the neighborhood affairs.

The Nagorik Committee leader's mentions that the committee is almost inactive for last 7/8 years and hardly performs any activities except arranging the annual *Durga Puja* festival under the name of Shanghamitra Puja Committee. But this committee, as mentioned by the leaders as well as by other residents, was really active and took a lot of initiative for the welfare of the area in the past and specifically in the 70s and 80s. In particular, their involvement to improve the situation of drug abuse and drug business, social welfare like awareness against early marriage and dowry, improvement

³⁸ Per capita arable land in Bangladesh is only 0.05 hectare in 2014 and it has been reduced from 0.17 in 1961. (See <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.ARBL.HA.PC>)

³⁹ Panchayet is a traditional CBO system in old Dhaka, it usually takes care of the general welfare of the *mahalla*.

⁴⁰ Mahallah is a Bengalin word, but originated from Arabic, which means neighborhood.

of physical environment, raising awareness about hygiene and health practice etc. are highly appreciated by the community and also the community regret on the current state of inertia.

5.2.1 Improvement of physical and built environment

As the CBO leaders describe the problems of the physical as well as built environment of the neighborhood and also identify some significant reasons pertaining to the problems, it can be argued that they are aware of the situation. But, in respect of their activities concerning improvement of the situation, it does not differ from the individual responses. Like the individual responses, collective efforts merely include any activities. The CBO leaders admit that they are not really taking any initiative, at present, to improve the situation. However, they claim that the CBO is in hibernation for almost a decade and they have become old enough to initiate activities as they did in the past. And, likewise, they also mention the due to the religious identity, the area is discriminated and there is minimum possibility that any efforts to improve the situation would be effective and fruitful.

The CBO is now limited only in matters related to transfer or sale of properties by the residents. It is an unwritten rule in the local community and any kind of property transfer is not done beyond the knowledge of the CBO. The CBO leaders also argues that the unsolved property ownership problem is the most critical barrier for improvement of the built-environment. Although the CBO is influential and have some power in the property related affairs but it is beyond their capacity to resolve such disputes. They mentioned tow events in this regard. First, in the early periods on independence, the Russian government offered a proposal for the improvement of the area. This proposal offered renovation or redevelopment, depending on the condition of the building, of the entire area at the cost of the Russian government, but it suggested restriction on the property right of the residents to sale or transfer the property. Due to this restriction, the residents did not agree to take the offer. The second one was a similar offer from the French government in the 80s. Including entire renovation or redevelopment of the area, this proposal additionally offered monthly financial benefit to the residents for living in the modified buildings, but it required the residents give up their property right to the development project. The residents did not agree. These two events could not be verified from other sources, but the Russian proposal was also mentioned by the interviewee involved in the mass media. The CBO leaders assess these two proposals very much relevant and mentions that they tried to advocate in favor of them to the community, but it did not work.

The CBO had performed a lot of activities to improve the physical environment in the past. In the early period of independence and in the 80s they had initiatives like waste

management, cleaning of public areas, raising awareness about hygiene and health practice etc.

5.2.2 Improvement of social environment

The leaders of the Nagorik Committee claim that the social environment of the neighborhood is satisfactory and it has much improved in some sectors, specially education, child marriage, superstitions etc. for example. In addition to the local residents, the CBO leaders believe the social environment is much better in old Dhaka than other areas, which is the new Dhaka, and they are proud of this. Even sometimes, the residents express pity for those who do not enjoy such a rich social environment, as they believe they enjoy. In fact, this notion is supported by all the actors regardless of their view in the urban problems of old Dhaka.

Some specific social and cultural events are celebrated here and then the whole neighborhood supports the celebration in many ways even if it requires closing the business for that part of the day. Many of such events are religious but also considered social festivals for the entire city and number of local tourists visit the are in such occasions and they are welcome cordially by the neighborhood and they are encouraged, if anyone is interested, to participate and offered free food and sweets as an emblem of recognition.

Specifically, about the social environment of Shankhari Bazar, ethnic exclusivity is of highest importance. And hence, all the concerns revolve around it. Beside this, the CBO is concerned and encourages cultural activities in the neighborhood. Henceforward, the neighborhood efforts concerning the social improvement are similar to the individual efforts.

The past activities of the CBO in respect to improve the social environment demands appreciation. In the decades of 70s and 80s the Nagorik Committee initiated activities to evict drug abuse and liquor business⁴¹ from the neighborhood. In addition, awareness raising about education, health and hygiene, moral degradation etc. were also initiated.

5.2.3 Concern about the social worth of the neighborhood

Neighborhood efforts concerning the social worth and welfare echo the individual responses as presented by the CBO leaders, they are informed about the social worth and are frustrated that this does not offer any visible improvement of material again for the residents or the neighborhood. Although they agree that the social worth could be a benefit for them if utilized properly, however at the same time they express

⁴¹ Islam being the state religion, liquor business is prohibited and accepted only for non-muslims and in some special cases with license.

unwillingness and hesitation to take any initiative by them without knowing the future. On the contrary, proposal of cultural or heritage tourism is not appreciated as they consider that others will make money out of such tourism and they won't get the real benefit. Henceforth, their effort can be identified as mostly limited to concern; but not real activities though they are capable of taking such responsibilities which is proven by their earlier activities.

5.2.4 Improvement of economic strength and business environment

The Nagorik Committee is aware about the economic strength of the residents and the business environment of the neighborhood. However, they consider the improvement of the situation as individual responsibility and demand public intervention for improvement. They consider it out of their scope to interfere in the scenario.

5.3 City and national level actions

Unlike many other urban areas in the industrialized western world, US cities for example, the state takes care of all the urban facilities in the South Asian region. Except only a few services, electricity distribution and telecom service for example, there is monopoly by the state run agencies. Particularly in respect with infrastructure and physical development, state authorities have the sole responsibility in Bangladesh like the neighboring countries. This also endows the responsibilities of addressing urban blight to the state run agencies.

Urban blight in the inner city involves a lot from the physical and built environment, but there are other aspects also; lack of urban services and the traditional business environment for example. This section focuses on the activities of state run agencies that are involved or responsible for such aspects. It also discusses the current setup of different agencies and their involvement as well as scope of intervention.

5.3.1 Authorities and their scope of interventions

Rahman (2008) depicts how different organizations with different responsibilities and jurisdictions are involved in the field of urban planning and development and describes the urban governance system in Bangladesh as weak and underdeveloped. He also shows the chaotic situation in the case of Dhaka where at least 20 ministries and 42 different agencies are involved directly, indirectly and occasionally in the governance and services for the Dhaka Metropolitan Area (DMA). Rahman (2008) identifies that there are at least 29 agencies that are directly involved in the urban services for DMA. In such a situation, unfortunately, lack of coordination is almost inevitable in all the cases.

In Dhaka, physical development and built environment belong to the RAJUK, except providing housing stocks in mass scale. All other service providing agencies are expected to consider coordination with the RAJUK about their programs in the city, as mentioned by the interviewees from RAJUK. However, RAJUK admits that it has not been able to achieve success in coordination, but the interviewees appeared to be more interested in pushing the responsibilities to others. They have mentioned that because RJUK is the supreme authority on the physical and built environment, the responsibility lies with other agencies to interact with RAJUK to make their programs coordinated with the RAJUK plan and all the institutions, regardless of their status, are legally bound to follow RAJUK regulations.

RAJUK admits about the responsibility endowed to address urban blight in the current administrative system. However, the activities of RAJUK merely prove any concern; activities of RAJUK are discussed in detail in next sections.

Beside RAJUK and the city corporation (the local municipality) several other institutions are also involved in the urban affairs of the city. In general, considering the urban blight situation in the inner city, discussion of activities of several public institutions are relevant for this research which includes, but of course not limited to, service providers like Dhaka Water Sewerage Authority (DWASA), Titas Gas, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) which has been converted to Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC) Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTTB) etc., Department of Archeology (DoA), Bangladesh Small and cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) etc.

5.3.2 Improvement of neighborhood and physical expansion

RAJUK acknowledges that the institution is solely responsible for physical 'development, improvement and expansion' of the area under jurisdiction as stated in the Town Improvement Act, 1953 which is the basis of RAJUK activities. However, it seems that RAJUK is more interested in physical expansion of the city rather improving the quality in the existing neighborhoods.

Respondents from different departments of RAJUK have mentioned that expansion is more relevant for the city now than improving the existing urban areas. They tried to justify their position with various arguments trying to establish that improvement of the inner city, particularly, is next to impossible. The existing condition of the inner city neighborhoods with too much congested development, lack of open spaces, narrow roads, numerous lanes, by-lanes and dead ends which are only know by the local residents, residents' attitude to encroachment of public land already encroached lands, traffic congestion, bazar activities in the residential area and extensive mixed land use

etc. are considered by them as sever drawbacks and these problems are regarded as beyond solution.

For example, widening of a street in the Nawabpur area was discussed as a sample case, and the discussion with different departments, Town Planning, Plan Preparation, Project and Design, Development Control and Detail Area Plan (DAP) namely, resulted in deductions that the street cannot be widened. Because there is no space available to widen the street, so it must be done by acquiring land from the individual owners which is next to impossible. In addition to the complicated and unclear property ownership there are other problems also. There would be pressure from local influential people who own the land there, and this is a business area so no one will be willing to leave a single square meter of land though everyone understands the necessity of widening. Again there will be political pressure from politicians not to go for widening as they do not want to lose their popularity considering the trend of electoral politics in reality. Moreover, there is enough previous experience of RAJUK in such case that the local residents protest such acquisition and prevent any activities, even like survey, and very often such protests get violent which might lead to bloodshed. Then some people will go to court and get a stay order to postpone any further activities by RAJUK until the matters are solved which can easily take years or even decades. Even if in some way it is managed to get the land for widening the street, then the compensation is another vital barrier. Usually compensations are made in several times of the land price as recorded, and there is problem in this land record system. Obviously, there is problem with regular updating the valuation of land; but the bigger problem is that, people register their land value much lower than the market value to reduce the tax and registration fee which is based on the land value. Therefore, there is a huge gap between the recorded land price and the market value of a land parcel. So people will not agree with the compensation which is based on the recorded land price. And there is a very wide scope of corruption in the procedure of making the list of affected persons and amount of compensation which is almost impossible to avoid. So it will be extremely expensive to take such a street widening process in Nwabpur. But some similar proposals are made in DAP and this will be discussed in next sections. In such cases mainly financial issues are considered, and usually in no project social impact analysis is conducted and therefore the impacts are unknown. Therefore, the conclusion was, no political government would be willing to take such difficulties, as RAJUK alone cannot do it without proper support from all other relevant public authorities. And it is much easier to develop a new land in the outskirts of the city. Land acquisition outside the city, which is mostly farmland or marshland, is considered much easier compared to the inner city as the people there lack the power and connection necessary to make such pressure and land price is much lower than the city proper.

RAJUK departments clearly mentions that with their capacity and the existing complicated land ownership pattern it is simply not possible to tackle such problems. Lack of resources is mentioned as the main problem, but lack of willingness also is unmistakably evident from their comments. Plainly, expansion receives priority. At least one respondent has mentioned, on the condition of anonymity, that political pressure on RAJUK is more powerful than any other factors that hinders improvement plan. He has mentioned that, there is tremendous political pressure on RAJUK for expansion from all the tiers of the society and public administration; ranging from ministers to the petty clerks of RAJUK and obviously the members of the society from professionals to the relatives of the RAJUK officers, also political parties are interested to manage plots for their supporters as rewards and allure for electoral politics. Beside this pressure, financial gain is another reason; though RAJUK takes care of the physical development but it does not have a tax base as source of revenue, property tax lies with the municipality (that mean DSCC and DNCC), therefore land development is a major source of earning for RAJUK.

There are some regulations for housing area development set by RAJUK. This is not maintained in the existing urban areas, RAJUK claims that the regulations are, and will be, maintained in the new developed areas. However, in recently developed areas like Uttara Third Phase and Purbachal satellite city there are examples of violation of the regulation by RAJUK itself.

5.3.3 Development control

Control of built environment in the city goes with RAJUK as it exercises the function according to the East Bengal Construction Act, 1952 and its subsequent Amendments and the Rules and By-laws framed thereunder, as it is mentioned in the RAJUK webpage⁴². Beside approving new construction and housing area development, checking discrepancies in built structures and taking appropriate actions also belong to the department of Development Control. Responsibility of vulnerable structures, identifying and taking necessary steps like removal etc., is disputed by the municipality (that mean DSCC and DNCC) and RAJUK, both institutions blame each other for the responsibility which results in doing nothing about this.

There is allegation that majority of the buildings on old Dhaka are not built according to appropriate regulations and not approved by RAJUK. It is also popularly believed, as well as mentioned by most of the interviewees from all groups, that less than honest officers and employees in RAJUK help the residents to have illegal construction works by taking bribes. The interviewees in the concerned department in RAJUK have not denied the allegations entirely. They have mentioned that a lot of buildings in the old

⁴² See <https://www.rajukdhaka.gov.bd/>

Dhaka, also in other areas of the city, are not built according to regulations. However, although admitting that some people in the RAJUK are corrupted, they try to justify their weakness with the excuses of lack of manpower, resources and the attitude of the residents. It is true that compared to the huge area and tremendous density⁴³ of the city, the resources available and capacity of RAJUK is very much negligible, and if no one informs them about any illegal construction then it is very difficult for RAJUK. And probably the resident's attitude also contributes to the situation generously.

The buildings construction laws are not suitable for many land parcels in the old Dhaka, this will be discussed in next chapter in detail. And it also takes enough money and time to get the plans approved from RAJUK. Therefore, many residents do not go for the approval procedure. Particularly in the 80s and 90s most of the buildings were built without consulting architects and generally by simply engaging a civil engineer to prepare the structural drawings and even sometimes just by the land owner following his intention with the help of masonry workers; as mentioned by urban scholars, urban professionals and some residents who had their buildings constructed in this way. Moreover, the residents seem to be well aware of the limitation of RAJUK which encourages them to opt for building construction on their own or violating the regulations. There is possibly also a consensus among the neighbors about this. For example, someone builds an 8 storied building without having the setbacks as required by regulations and when it is not permitted to have more than 6 stories, then in next coming years more or less everyone follows the first person. And then none complaints to RAJUK, because then everyone must suffer. Such events are mentioned by residents themselves. Also it is less expensive to bribe an officer in RAJUK compared to the market price of apartments and each additional square meter of built area counts.

RAJUK is simply entitled to check for faulty building constructions, but due to lack of proper considerations in the building regulations, it cannot control if new buildings are compatible with the historic urban fabric of the inner city neighborhoods.

5.3.4 DAP and its role in fighting urban blight

DAP is the only available spatial planning document for the city of Dhaka and neighboring areas. This is prepared under the guidelines of Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) 1995-2015. RAJUK webpage states that preparation of DAP started in 2004 and was expected to be published by 2008. After some disputes, cases, protests and review finally it was published as a gazette in June 23, 2010 and it was expected to be executed by 1015, which did not take place. In 2014, RAJUK

⁴³ Dhaka, probably, has the heist density in the world of 44,500 people per sq km, while Mumbai is second, and Manila is fourth. (See <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/may/11/where-world-most-densely-populated-city>).

informed, in an interview, that a review of DAP would come quickly to assess the implementation and proposal for the next phase 2016-2035. However, nothing has been officially declared or published afterwards. According to newspaper articles, RAJUK has formulated a draft masterplan titled as Dhaka Structure plan 2016-2035 and presented in a seminar for expert opinion (Habib, 2015; The Daily Star, 2015c).

In scope and nature, DAP is a land use plan and not very much different than a master plan approach, moreover it proposes suitable land use for the area under jurisdiction following the structure plan but implementation strategy is largely missing in the document. Discussion of DAP for this research requires insight into the preparation process, proposals for the inner city and its implementation.

Preparation of DAP

The Structure Plan (SP) and Urban Area Plan (UAP) in the DMDP are basically policies; DAP is the actual instrument to implement the policies. DMDP was published in 1997, and it took decades to prepare the DAP. Preparation started in 2004, after long waiting period and was expected to be finished in 2008. Unlike the DMDP, DAP is not prepared by RAJUK, the entire planning area was divided in 5 segments and the planning task was delegated to 5 consulting firms namely Development Design Consultants Limited (DDC), Engineering Planning & Consultants (EPC), Ganibangla Limited (GBL), Sheltech (Pvt.) Ltd. and BETS Consulting Services Ltd. The area of the Dhaka city proper is in group C and DAP for this area is prepared by GBL and DDC jointly.

The preparation process is much criticized and disputed. There were allegations from urban professionals that the consultants are protecting the vested interest of real estate developers as the consultants are closely related and in some cases involved in real estate business (Ali, 2007). After a draft was submitted in 2008, it was criticized rigorously for supporting real estate business and being harmful for open space, marshland and water bodies instead of protecting them (Ali, 2007; The Daily Star, 2008b; Bangladesh Institute of Planners, 2008). It was also accused for supporting urban divide by offering huge amount of residential land for rich people than the urban poor and promoting private transport. In many occasions real estate developers have expressed their discontent for the DAP and have asked for change in it to benefit their business interest (The Daily Star, 2010c). And the DAP is accused for nodding under the pressure of powerful realtors, many of them are politicians and even the parliamentary committee on land and housing is headed by a real estate business tycoon (Roy and Alam, 2010). After protest from different segments of the society and movements by urban and environmental activist there were some rounds of review, and finally DAP was gazetted and became legally binding in June, 2010. However, in the face of strong opposition from realtors and Dhaka lawmakers, the government had to stall the implementation and made it a subject to a review by a cabinet committee,

and RAJUK claim that they could not implement vital suggestions of the DAP as the cabinet committee did not give them any directives (Ali and Byron, 2015; Ali, 2013b).

DAP for next 20 years is now under preparation. RAJUK is alleged for preparing this phase of DAP secretly by appointing Sheltech (Pvt.) Limited, The Decode Limited and DDC, even without informing relevant professional bodies like Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), only to facilitate all the powerful realtors that have engulfed the open spaces and wetlands mercilessly (Ali and Byron, 2015).

DAP suggestions for old Dhaka

For convenience, the entire group C area under DAP is divided into 13 segments called Detailed Planning Zone (DPZ). The 26 wards that makes old Dhaka are under DPZ 1 and DPZ 2. The area in the western border of DPZ 8 is not officially included in old Dhaka, however popularly considered a part of old Dhaka. The case study area of Shankhari Bazar lies in the DPZ 1. DAP distinguishes DPZ 1 as the commercial hub of the city and DPZ 2 as residential and industrial area whilst recognizing both of them as the historical city core of Dhaka with extensive mixed land use.

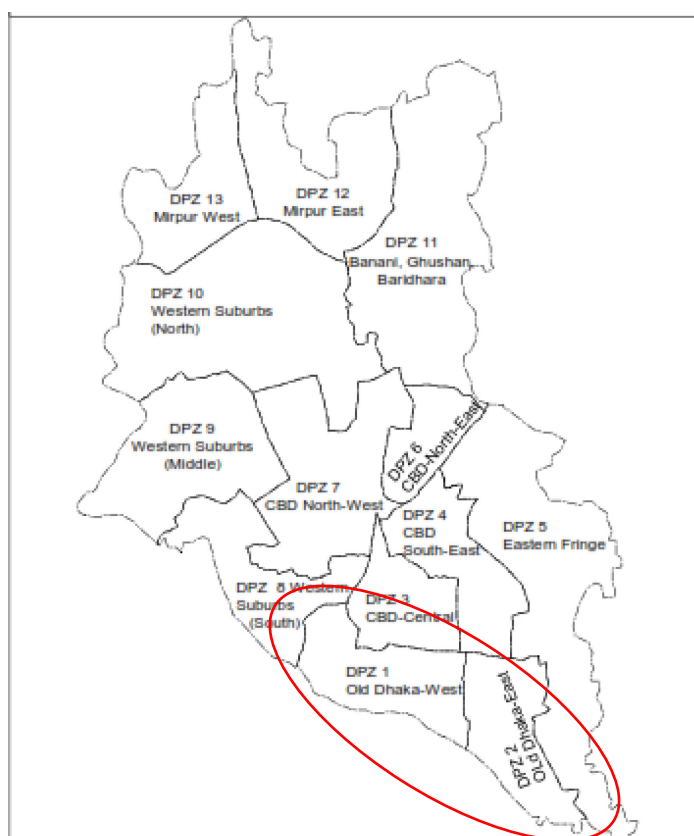


Figure 37: DPZ 1 and DPZ 2 that makes old Dhaka are marked in the entire Group C area

Source: Modified from the DAP report for Group C, 2010.

DAP recognizes the problem of poor quality of living in the old Dhaka and consider the area under urban blight. The major problems, if summarized from the DAP, include aging and poor quality of housing stocks, new development which is incompatible with the urban fabric, poor quality and deficit of infrastructures as well as urban services like

sewerage and drainage, water and electricity supply, narrow roads with alleys, lanes and by-lanes, environmental pollution etc. It is also stated that the concentration of low income population, lost grandeur of historical upscale residential areas, increasing trend of commercialization of residential land use, lack of recreational facilities and open space foster urban blight.

DAP provides some general suggestion and specific proposals for certain neighborhoods. Overall suggestions are as follows.

- Traffic management to improve the traffic congestion situation.
- Road widening and linking a few roads.
- Maintenance of roads and drainage system.
- Involving the local leaders in urban renewal program.
- Hiring and involving NGOs for environmental upgrading for the low income areas and involving them in providing economic opportunities for these areas through micro credit.
- Commissioning NGOs or DCC intervention in urban revitalization to promote sanitation, water supply, solid waste management, housing schemes etc. for low income areas.
- Preparing utility development plans for more densely populated areas where RAJUK is responsible coordinating with other institutions like WASA, DPDC, Titas Gas, BTTB, DCC etc.
- Relocation of squatter settlement in other appropriate locations, such as Bhasantek⁴⁴.
- Elimination of environmental pollution, specifically pollution of the river Buriganga.
- Supporting vertical expansion to reveal open space.
- Reestablishment of the lost glory of upscale residential areas such as Wari, Gendaria, Narinda etc.

Specifically, urban renewal is suggested as the instrument to improve the living quality in several neighborhoods such as Shankhari Bazar, Islambagh, Shaheed Nagar, Lalbagh, Amligola, Rasulpur, Wari, Gendaria, Narinda, Titatuki etc. In the document 'urban renewal', 'urban revitalization' and 'environmental upgrading' are mentioned several

⁴⁴ Bhasantek is an area which is for rehabilitation of slum dwellers and this is the only initiative taken from the public sector. This project is disputed and criticized for depriving the slum dwellers and corruption in various aspects.

times and it appears that these terms are used synonymously and interchangeably, as several tools are suggested for the same neighbored or same explanations of different terms are observed.

Specific proposals are purely land use proposals in scope and they include Buriganga riverfront development, Shankhari Bazar development, Central Jail area redevelopment, relocation of Hazaribagh tannery industries and management of a few historical sites in the old Dhaka. In general, these proposals opt for clearing the existing illegal and harmful land use from the premises, relocation and rehabilitation of the affected population, conservation and restoration of certain built structures and redevelopment of the rest through land pooling or land readjustment system and, last but not least, promotion of tourism.

DAP is supposed to translate the policies in the SP and UAP into land use plan for the city. But in many cases, DAP does not provide clear direction and to some extents simply echo the previous guidelines, which is also mentioned by some urban professionals. DAP is also criticized for its lack of reality sense and implementation strategy by urban professionals, scholars and even some urban activists. For example, it is suggested in the DAP that a few roads in the city core to be widened, or create open space along the riverside or relocation of slums from Islambagh; such actions are considered impractical and even impossible in the present situation and where there are examples of failure in similar fields. Even some professionals from the public institutions in the field of spatial development acknowledge that DAP is very much difficult to implement as there are many recommendations that are impractical and controversial as well as conflicting with the SP and UAP guidelines. Yet, with all the flaws, DAP is the only available spatial planning document and it does not intend to do harm, in general, for the city dwellers despite the allegations for favoring some specific group.

Implementation of DAP

DAP could be identified as land use proposal which is legally binding for everyone and DAP considers RAJUK as the sole custodian and implementing authority, though implementation strategy and management of resources are not clear in the DAP proposals. DAP was finalized in 2010 and it was supposed to be implemented by 2015. In 2012, when the first round of data collection was conducted for this research, negligible achievement was observed concerning implementation. Until 2015, when the DAP is expected to be implemented and which is the end of the time frame, to be realistic; nothing has been implemented.

Since 2008, debates are ongoing about the implementation of DAP and all the concerned sectors declare that it has to be implemented. Implementation of DAP has

gained a political color and, probably, is being treated as a political agenda also. As implementation of DAP would require large scale relocation industries, change in land use, demolition of built structures and acquisition of privately owned land for various purposes; therefore, colossal financial resources are required and it would be impossible to implement without public support. There are already many examples of public protest against DAP, even a new road, which was proposed by DAP, construction was violently protested by the local people as it demanded acquisition of privately owned land (The Daily Star, 2008c; Roy, 2010). The government, most probably, has taken the policy of 'go slow' about it. It has been mentioned several times that implementation of DAP is a must to save Dhaka and would be implemented at any cost, on the other hand it is also mentioned that none, including the realtors, would be affected in the implementation whilst in some other time it is declared that DAP would be implemented along with everyone (Ali, 2013a; Tusher, 2013). This simply appears to be a political agenda; as public support is important for political governments hence it cannot be sacrificed. Also real estate business lords are against DAP, as it reserves 21% land of the city as reserved wetlands where no developers would be permitted, and government's approach to protect wetlands and flood flow zones, and they have challenged the government in several occasions and are trying to bend the proposals for their benefit and apparently succeeded (The Daily Star, 2010c; Roy and Alam, 2010; Ali, 2012).

Urban scholars and professionals are doubtful about the implementation of DAP, they consider it difficult for a political government as they recognize that RAJUK would concentrate simply on building permit and expansion and would not move on its own if there is no political pressure on them to accomplish the DAP. The DAP department in RAJUK, however, is optimistic about the future of DAP. The respondent has agreed that there are flaws in the document and they would be corrected and he mentioned that the revision and amendment of the current document is under preparation and after this reviewed DAP would be published for the period of 2016-2035. The responses were quite tricky about the allegations against DAP; it was mentioned that the real estate sector should not be considered as enemy to the people as they are trying to solve the housing problem and creating employment, it was also mentioned that there are and always would be some people who oppose public projects. Nonetheless, the interviewee recognized compensation, people's reluctance for land acquisition, lack of resource and lack of willingness as most difficult barriers in the implementation of DAP. On the other hand, DAP is recognized as a trump card for justifying all the apathy and inertia on behalf of RAJUK to facilitate particular groups' vested interest, as mentioned by some conservationist architects and urban professionals. They have mentioned that RAJUK takes actions in favor of specific groups and justify that by referring DAP; on the other hand, does not take any action

where needed by saying that it is not in the DAP. Besides, the review procedure is also recognized to be utilized to offer more for those groups. Some urban scholars and professionals, with doubt about the implementation, have opined that in next few years nothing would happen, everyone waits for 2015 when DAP expires, and then the existing situation would be approved in the reviewed plan and the groups with vested interest would utilize the meantime to make the amendments in their favor. Considering the previous event of draft presentations and finalization of DAP, experts mentioned that such assumptions have good chances to be materialized.

And unfortunately, it appears that the pessimistic assumptions have started to materialize. In the previous DAP at least one-third of the metropolitan area was earmarked as flood flow zones, water retention ponds and water bodies. Real estate developers have already filled up a vast portion, which is estimated to be more than 80 percent, of designated wetlands and flood flow zones (Ali, 2013b; Ali, 2013a). The following images of the fringe areas of Dhaka show just how the low lying wetlands are already in the process of real estate development.



Plate 36: Wetlands are earmarked with pillars to be filled up (left) and low lying land that is already filled up for real estate development. Images taken in the outskirts of Dhaka in 2017.

Source: Author.

While the previous DAP is mostly unimplemented, and this owes much to the political unwillingness of government and RAJUK, the review process for the next phase has been initiated and being prepaid without transparency. And already responsible officials are heard to make statement such as, accepting what has been done, making a pragmatic DAP not a homemade one etc. (The Daily Star, 2015c; Ali and Byron, 2015). The entire scenario leaves little hope for proper implementation of DAP.

5.3.5 DSCC⁴⁵ involvement

The DSCC, albeit being the local government is marginally involved in the urban development of the city. It has limited responsibilities in the city area and has very

⁴⁵ The entire Dhaka was maintained by the DCC, but during the course of this study, DCC was divided into DSCC and DNCC to administer the southern and northern parts of Dhaka. Most of the

limited power for decision making on general urban development programs outside the assigned responsibilities, as mentioned by the respondents from DSCC. Following the DSCC webpage⁴⁶ and interviewees, it is responsible for waste management, management of DSCC owned open spaces, street management including cleaning and street lighting, slum development and management of public toilets, bus terminals and market places in respect to direct involvement in spatial development of the city. In addition, DSCC is responsible for providing services and management of primary health care, primary education, civil defense, funeral services, social welfare, festival and fair management, mosquito control, animal husbandry and slaughter houses and control of food and drinks in the market places for the city dwellers. DSCC also controls trade license for businesses and collects the holding tax which is the main source of their revenue. The Urban Planning Department is only responsible for planning the DSCC projects and has no association with urban planning for the city.

Thus, DSCC have a very solid ground to say that they do not have the authority to take actions to fight urban blight; and DSCC says so. Yet, it is possible to have small steps to improve the living condition in the neighborhoods; and DSCC in some cases have taken steps such as providing water supply in some slum areas as revealed by DSCC representatives. Although, this is supposed to be the duty of DSCC and not to be considered special achievements; in considering the reality where rarely anything happen such steps needs to be appreciated.

According the interviewee in the urban planning section of DSCC, all the responsibilities of urban development that are currently delegated to various agencies, must be coordinated and DSCC is supposed to be the platform in the form of a Metropolitan Government, however he also mentions that it is merely a utopia. He also states that, as RAJUK is an older institution than DSCC they would not like to be internalized within the DSCC, moreover as it is a trend that more or less all the public authorities operate on their own and lacks responsibility, so no authority would like to come under an umbrella of Metropolitan Government or in similar platform where they have to sacrifice their discretion power.

Therefore, it appears that under the prevailing administrative framework, DSCC has little scope to take bold actions, but taking small steps are within their capacity. However, small steps are not always taken. For example, garbage management is cared by DSCC; but DSCC is quiet often blamed for mismanagement, negligence and failure (Alam, 2011b; Alam, 2009; Islam and Shafi, 2004). Also, the mismanagement of open spaces can be mentioned where DSCC itself is blamed for occupying city parks (Alam,

interviews of this study was conducted with the then DCC. As the study area, that is the inner city of Dhaka, falls under the jurisdiction of DSCC, therefor the DCC is replaced with DSCC.

⁴⁶ See <http://www.dhakasouthcity.gov.bd/services/index.html>.

2011c; Alam, 2011a; Rahman, 2004b). DSCC representatives have mentioned in interviews the typical cause of lacking resources to justify their actions.

5.3.6 Urban services and different authorities' involvement

Urban services are provided and dominated by the public sector except a few sector such as internet and telecom which is dominated by the private sector. Like many other public agencies, also there is lack of coordination among the agencies, in both horizontal and vertical direction. Again, there is no set rule how the demand of more services for neighborhoods are calculated. From interviews with representatives from various service providing agencies, some outline of operational procedure was derived. It appears that, provision of urban service is a political agenda and it depends largely on the local MP. For public investment, the local MP conveys the local need to the authority and budgets are allocated according to urgency and availability through the Annual Development Program (ADP) and then the concerned service providing agencies execute the scheme. It was not clear the role of local people in the process, as it also happens, although rarely, that at the demand of immediate action sometimes are taken. Maintenance of already installed services are considered routine work for the service providers. Also in this process power game is a big issue, which opens the door for corruption in the agencies, as mentioned by many urban scholars and also claimed by corruption observers like Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) (The Daily Star, 2015d; The Daily Star, 2005; Zahur, 2010).

Most of the infrastructure for utility services are very old, sometimes from the colonial age, such as water supply and sewerage lines in some parts of Dhaka. They require upgrading and in some cases total replacement. For distressed areas, in particular, there appears to be no special consideration, but the scarcity is generally acknowledged by the concerned agencies. This is practical to say that Dhaka serves many more times of population than the capacity and it is difficult to provide quality service within the current framework. Nevertheless, the service providers have their justification for their inertia; obviously the lack of resources. Although, it is not impossible to increase efficiency within the available resources, but lack of motivation and willingness might be more powerful.

5.3.7 Conservation of built and cultural heritage

Conservation, maintenance and promotion of built and cultural heritage, across the country, is primarily dealt by the Department of Archaeology which belongs to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Conservation and protection of antiquities in the country are guided by The Antiquities Act, 1968. The department is in charge of 398 national heritage sites including 2 UNESCO declared World Cultural Heritage Sites in Paharpur and Bagerhat.

In the city of Dhaka, this department is in charge of 13 listed heritage sites, the most famous one is the Lalbagh Fort, a protected heritage since 1910. The fort was renovated in the 1980s when the *Diwan-i-Aam*⁴⁷ hall and *hammam* was converted into a museum and the entire complex was made open for public. This place is considered the only large open space in the inner city, though it's not free and people must pay a fee to enter the complex.



Plate 37: (clockwise) Lalbagh Fort in the congested old Dhaka, a closer view, the South Gate in fort in 1904 and after renovation.

Source: (clockwise) Adapted from Google Map, Prabir Das in Star Weekend (2016), Fritz Kapp, (Bangladedpia) and Shmunmun (2011).

However, the restoration is criticized by conservationist architects. Some architects also believe that UNESCO denial to declare the site as World Cultural Heritage Site owes the inappropriate restoration that has altered the original character or the fort complex. The following images might help to understand the Lalbagh Fort as an oasis in the congested old Dhaka and how it looked earlier.

Another example worth mention is the Ahsan Manjil⁴⁸ restoration, as shown in the succeeding images. This project was conducted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs under the supervision of the Director of Public Works and Architecture. In 1985, Ahsan Manzil and its surroundings were acquired. After the completion of the renovation work in 1992 under the supervision of the Directorate of Public Works and Architecture, it was

⁴⁷ It is the main assembly hall used for administrative purpose.

⁴⁸ This was the official residential palace and seat of the Nawab Family of Dhaka.

brought under the control of Bangladesh National Museum (Alamgir, 2015). This palace has been converted into a museum open for all with an entry fee. The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh restored Nimtali Deuri⁴⁹ in 2011-12 (Ahmed, 2015). The latest example is the restoration of Baro Sardar Bari in Sonargaon area, near the Panamnagar, which was completed in 2015 (The Daily Star, 2015a). This project was financed by Youngone group, from South Korea, from their corporate social responsibility budget.



Plate 38: Ahsan Manjil before (left) and after (right) restoration.

Source: Images taken from (left) Quader (2013) and (right) Shaheed (2012).



Plate 39: Nimtali Deuri before (left) and after restoration (right).

Source: Ahmed (2015).

Apart from these, there seems not to be any more example of conservation and restoration of historical monuments in Dhaka. The only area wide conservation initiative of Panam Nagar Conservation project, located in greater Dhaka, was a failure and ultimately abandoned (Ahmed, 2012) which is already discussed (see 3.4.5). RAJUK and DCC are not involved in direct conservation or restoration activities. RAJUK has issued a gazette, named The Preservation of Historical Buildings, Infrastructures, Important Locations, 2009, declaring 93 buildings and 13 streets as protected and prohibiting any modification to the buildings without approval of the relevant authority.

⁴⁹ Meaning the Nimtali Gate. This is the surviving gateway of the extinct Nimtali Palace, the residence of the Naib-Nazim (Deputy-Governor) of Dhaka Province in the last days of Mughal Rule.

And nothing more is cared by RAJUK, maintenance of these structures is assumed to be cared by the respective owners. Consequently, it goes like that, no one cares for restoration and conservation of built heritage in Dhaka.

5.3.8 Traditional business and BSCIC involvement

The inner city houses various types of traditional business and most of them are not found in other parts of the city, thus, being exclusive to the inner city core of Dhaka. Many of such business are considered handicrafts and could be recognized as small and cottage industries following the types of products, production mode, labor employment and investment as identified by the BSCIC. The Industrial Policy, 2010 and The Factory Act, 1940 do not recognize all such business, either handicrafts manufacturing or service oriented business, as small or cottage industries following the indicators of labor and cost of the manufacturing unit, nonetheless. However, BSCIC states that such policy guidelines are considered 'theoretical' and BSCIC follows its own identification, which is mostly perception, as there is no written guidelines or standards for identifying handicrafts, cottage industry or small industry.

Following such argument from the BSCIC, the traditional business in old Dhaka, such as kite and kite accessories making, fire crackers making, cork-sheet crafts, conch shell products, candle and perfumed-stick making, stone crafts, clay idol making, accessories for decoration of clay idols and *jatrapala*⁵⁰, musical instruments making, gold and silver jewelry etc. could be identified as traditional handicrafts. Some specific economic activities could be identified as traditional business such as business of *abeer*⁵¹, metal crafts used in religious purpose, *baniaty* etc. and some as traditional service industry like specific food, tailoring, fabric craft, blacksmith, repairing for clocks, umbrella, lock-and-key etc. Besides, other small industries in old Dhaka such as cane products, leather products, paper recycling and paper products, plastic products, shoe making etc. are not considered as traditional business.

Concerning the traditional crafts and business in the Shankhari Bazar and adjacent area, BSCIC was consulted about their role as it is the institution responsible for taking care of such enterprises. The local entrepreneurs denied any involvement of BSCIC in this regard. In long discussions with several members from BSCIC, the institutions perception and their involvement were made clear. In general, BSCIC performs all over the country and has no specific consideration about the old Dhaka. The main target of BSCIC is operating industrial parks in different locations of the country for small enterprises and it regrets that the entrepreneurs are not willing to take advantage of

⁵⁰ *Jatrapala* is traditional form of theater which is usually practiced in rural areas. This a very popular tradition, usually performed on open stage and mostly the stories are taken from, mythical, religious, and historical events which require very special accessories.

⁵¹ Means color, various types of colors are used for the color festival of Holi and for other purposes.

such parks. The success of such industrial parks are limited there are examples that both BSCIC and the entrepreneurs blame each other for the failures (Ahsan, 2013; The Daily Star, 2014a). Besides, BSCIC provides training for entrepreneurs in regular interval and arranges fairs where the entrepreneurs can sell their products. BSCIC generally provides training only for few sectors, such as honey production, needle work on fabric, dress making, doll making, food preservation, wood carving etc. Generally, BSCIC is not involved in marketing the crafts except arranging regular crafts fairs where anyone can sell their product upon registration for the fair. BSCIC has mentioned that they had bitter experience with marketing abroad and typically the buyers are interested in such low price which is not possible for handmade products, therefore BSCIC has retreated from marketing efforts and are more interested in promoting handicrafts by providing trainings.

BSCIC does not have any list of guidelines for selecting the sector for training or a list of traditional crafts in Bangladesh or a list for BSCIC's concern. Respondents have mentioned that they select the trainings based on demand and the availability of trainers, and unfortunately there are no training courses available for the traditional crafts in Shankhari Bazar or old Dhaka. The Design Center in BSCIC, this department is responsible for such training courses, has acknowledged that some crafts like cork-sheet crafts and conch shell products of Shankhari Bazar are in vulnerable position and they deserve to get state support, however BSCIC cannot provide any support due to lack of trainers. The Design Center also mentioned the artisans' lack of willingness to cooperate, which was evident in the only, so far, design workshop in the 90s arranged by them for *shankha* (conch shell bangles) artisans, the new designs for bangles provided in the workshop were rejected by the artisans as they are more time consuming; working time is important for the artisans as they are paid on how many pairs they can make, not for the quality of design. The Design Center have identified the religious recognition of Shankhari Bazar crafts as a draw back for their demand and popularity, and acknowledge that the products have a very small market which also not an encouraging situation for BSCIC to invest in new training courses beside the established courses.

5.3.9 Noxious industries and relevant authorities' involvement

Noxious industries emitting environmental pollution and serious risk to the residents is vital problem in many neighborhoods of the entire city. In the inner city concentration of chemical industries and warehouses, foundry works and the leather industries to the north-west have make the situation sever.

Ministry of Industries, FBCCI, MCCI, associations of different industry owners', BSCIC and Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defense that issues the Fire License are, but not

limited to, the major authorities involved in this sector. Apparently, none of these authorities care for hazardous industries and warehouses in old Dhaka. The Nimtali tragedy was a terrible experience for the city and it motivated a movement. It was expected that at the cost of 125 lives, the future would be secured. However, there is no evidence that, except a sudden emotional involvement of the entire society and some oral promises and fewer action from different authorities, the situation have not been improved (Ahammed, 2010; Mollah and Khan, 2013; Yusuf, 2013; The Daily Star, 2011f), as shown in the succeeding images.



Plate 40: Shops and warehouses of flammable chemicals keep stay in old Dhaka after the Nimtali fire tragedy in June 3, 2010. Images are taken (after the fire incident) in June 2010 (left) June, 2013 (middle) and in March, 2017 (right).

Source: (left to right) Images from Ahammed (2010), Mollah and Khan (2013), and Yusuf (2013).

In 2017, after seven years of the inferno, following the eviction of hawkers from the central areas of Dhaka and some fire events as well as public demand, the DSCC initiated an eviction drive against chemical warehouses in the city core (The New Age Bangladesh, 2017; Jibon, 2017; Rabbi, 2017) but unfortunately it had to be postponed due to a lack of police support very soon (Mollah and Saad, 2017).

Even after seven years of the Nimtali tragedy, the proposed 'Chemical *Palli*⁵²' in Keraniganj on the outskirts of Dhaka has is yet to see any light (Biswas, 2017). The role of different industry owners' associations as well as the FBCCI and MCCI are disputed. In discussions with representatives of the FBCCI and BSCIC, the unwillingness to talk about this topic was clear, and it was also observed that they tried to justify their position by mentioning the same classical excuse of resource deficiency and people's insolence.

5.4 External actors' involvement

Not only the neighborhood and state authorities, many other external actors are also involved in the affairs that influence the fate of a neighborhood. This section describes the efforts from different external actors, like NGOs, urban activists and scholars and development partners, to address urban blight situation in Dhaka. Not all the actors take direct actions to confront urban blight in Shankhari Bazar or other neighborhoods;

⁵² Palli is a Bengali word which means village.

in most cases actions are isolated and considered for specific target population or target area.

5.4.1 NGO and urban activists' involvement

Bangladesh has advanced, since independence, in economic and social growth tremendously compared to many countries with the similar condition. The Economist recognizes the success as being out of the basket while it was considered the original 'basket case' of South Asia. Though still Bangladesh remains a poor country, yet the social achievements are greater than the economic ones. Besides the credit earned by the government and population for such achievements, The Economist also recognizes that the contribution of the nationwide NGOs in this success (The Economist, 2012a; The Economist, 2012b).

NGOs' involvement is more in the rural sector than urban sector. Yet Several NGOs and activists, both individuals and organizations, are involved in active movements and direct activities for improvement of neighborhoods and the city in various issues. In the urban areas they are primarily concerned about issues like health, education, water and sanitation, poverty alleviation, women empowerment, slum upgrading, environmental problems etc. and few are involved in built-environment sector which is mainly focuses on built heritage conservation.

Poverty alleviations

Poverty alleviation is probably the most important sector considered by the NGOs and urban activists. And also probably majority of such organizations are involved in poverty alleviation programs. Although rural poverty sector receives more attention, such programs for the urban poor generally target the hardcore urban poor group and their activities are usually limited to support pavement dwellers, floating populations and slum inhabitants; probably due to the visible and necked expression of urban poverty in these areas. Areas, like Shankhari Bazar, though the residents are poor but in much better condition than the slums, in Begunbri or Taltola for example, and the residents can easily be considered rich compared to the pavement dwellers. Lower income people in the inner city, like those in Shankhari Bazar, Tanti Bazar, Amligola or Lalbagh for example, are not in immediate need of some assistance what the slum dwellers might deserve. Thus, conventional poverty alleviation program by the NGOs and urban activists usually do not target the inner city neighborhoods, which is the target area in this research, as there are more sever needy areas demanding for support.

Environmental problem

Urban movement for saving the environment of the city can be described as a recent phenomenon. The most recent addition in this field is climate change adaptation for

the city of Dhaka. Environmental movements in Dhaka includes, but not limited to, environmental pollution, tree planning, cleanliness and conservation of water bodies and marshland. Bangladesh Paribes Andolon (BAPA), Paribesh Banchao Andolon (PABA), Waste Concern, Center for Urban Studies (CUS), Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies (BCAS), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) etc. are the most notable NGOs and activists involved in the environmental movement in the city.

In the inner city area, environmental pollution caused by the industries and the river Buriganga are in the center of environmental movement. Industries along the river and in other residential areas especially the Hazaribagh tannery industries are causing severe environmental pollution to the old city.

Environmental movements in the inner city has recently gained attention, however, the success, at least in terms of restraining individual or organizational response to waste and pollutant emission and disposal, is not clearly visible yet. In response to such movements some actions are taken, but they are generally normative rather implemented in the field, for example the High Court have ordered the responsible authorities to make the rivers surrounding Dhaka pollution and occupation free; however, the authorities have not initiated activities accordingly.

Built heritage conservations

Movements about built heritage is also a recent phenomenon and probably younger in age than the environmental movements. Asiatic society, Bangladesh, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) and Urban Study Group (USG) are the organizations active in this field. The Asiatic Society, Bangladesh is mainly involved in research about the city of Dhaka and Bangladesh in general. In 2010, the city has celebrated its 400 year as a capital city and the Asiatic Society, Bangladesh had a very important role in this celebration through their research and publication dedicated towards Dhaka. Besides, the Nimtoli Deuri is restored solely by the Asiatic Society, Bangladesh. The USG is the most active as well as vocal in this field, especially against demolition of built heritage. USG earns most of the credit of the action by RAJUK to declare 93 buildings and 13 streets in the city for preservation and prohibit any kind of modification without the permission of the authority. Besides, USG have also taken initiative to prepare proper documentation of existing built heritage in the inner city. Most probably this organization is the single one that works area wide scale in the city and prepares architectural documentation. Besides documentation and movement against destruction of built heritage, USG also offers walking tours in the inner city and organizes exhibition about conservation and restoration of neighborhoods and buildings.

In the Shankhari Bazar and adjacent areas USG have done, as mentioned by the organization, large scale mass communication to make the residents aware of the heritage value of the buildings as well as the cultural value of the traditional business and lifestyle of the residents. USG have also organized exhibitions about showing the possibilities of restoration and conservation of the area. However, when asked about the vision of the USG on the study area and the inner city in general, the responses quite clearly denotes the preference for built heritage over the quality of life of the residents. For USG, preservation of built heritage is the key to the improvement of everything and the neighborhood can flourish and go for sustainable development only by preserving their built heritage. On the other hand, the residents have mixed response about the activities and goal of USG, majority of the respondents have shown disregard for the preservation concern of USG and believes that USG has just said nice words to them about the future and in reality the injunction on modification of the buildings has made harm to them; only a few respondents believe the USG has done something right and have agreed that the area should be preserved.

5.4.2 Urban scholars' involvement

Individual researchers, universities and research organizations comprise this group. Almost all the interviewees agree that this is an important but unexplored field of research and unfortunately institutions, like universities, research organizations or other public institutions, are not interested in this field. Researchers who have worked in this field or in similar or related fields have done that out of their own individual interest and not from their organizations. In, most cases such research works are the outcome of their higher education program. Thus, the scholars' involvement primarily includes individual academic interest and not direct involvement or initiatives for implementation of their research outcome.

5.4.3 Development partners' involvement

Development partners are considered vital for the national development programs. They are considered to have an important role in the national budget and planning of development. Urban renewal, or through any other program, to counter urban blight in neighborhoods, seems not to be of direct consideration of the development partners in Bangladesh. Though in some neighboring countries, in Nepal for example, urban renewal is greatly supported by development aid; Germany supports urban development and urban renewal as very important sector for assistance through both financial and technical manners. However, it is probably not the case in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, lion's share of the development aid is considered for food and nutrition; then comes health, education, energy, disaster management, agriculture etc.; as mentioned by the interviewees in the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Ministry

of Finance, Planning Commission, and urban scholars who also have expertise in the policy research sector. These respondents have also mentioned that in general development aid is aimed for national development but there is always an emphasis for rural development, and only a few countries/institutions consider particular support for urban development, Japan, Germany and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for example. Even such urban support programs primarily include water and sanitation as well as education in the slum areas, infrastructure development, and governance support to municipalities and local governments like preparing planning document, feasibility study etc. Urban blight is not a recognized sector for the development partners for support, however conservation is, therefore assistance is available and has been applied for a few programs that are purely conservation oriented, the Panam Nagar Conservation project for example, though the project was not implemented.

This opinion from the scholars and the public authorities is also supported by the contacted persons from Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank. Also the webpages of different development agencies in Bangladesh, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)⁵³, GIZ⁵⁴, Swedish International Development Authority (Sida)⁵⁵, Canadian International Development Agency (Cida)⁵⁶, USAID⁵⁷ etc. for example, mentions their field of activities in Bangladesh which clearly shows their priority of activities where urban renewal or improvement of inner city neighborhoods are not found.

5.5 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, the current situation of addressing urban blight, following the issues discoursed in chapter 4, by different actors are discussed. Actions from individual, neighborhood, state and external actors to counter urban blight are discussed in reference with the Shankhari Bazar as well as city scale.

It is observed that from individuals, almost no actions are perceptible except the concern to improve the business. Religious identity based discrimination is regarded by the residents to justify their passiveness. Collective actions in the neighborhood follow the individual pattern almost entirely. Religious identity is a justification for both inaction as well as a strong platform for neighborhood solidarity and concern to protect

⁵³ See http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/index.html

⁵⁴ See <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/351.html>

⁵⁵ See <http://www.sida.se/English/where-we-work/Asia/Bangladesh/Our-work-in-Bangladesh/>

⁵⁶ See <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/cpo.nsf/fWebCSAZEn?ReadForm&idx=10&CC=BD>

⁵⁷ See <https://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/our-work>

this solidarity. In both cases of individual and neighborhood perception, all the responsibilities are bestowed to the state.

Correspondingly in the existing legal and administrative system, state is endowed with major share of responsibilities to address urban blight, such as in respect with spatial planning, physical environment, built environment and development control, urban services, conservation of antiquities, poverty alleviation, business promotion, education and health care etc. However, the concerned state agencies appear not to be concerned about urban blight in the city and are involved in activities, such as physical expansion of the city, according to their own perceived priority. It is observed that state agencies acknowledge their responsibilities about urban blight; nonetheless they try to justify their activities by mentioning lack of resources and arguing that the inner city blight situation is beyond improvement. For the external actors, urban blight, again, is not an important sector for involvement and investment. It is only a subject of academic interest and tourism oriented conservationists.

6 Chapter 6: Improvement of urban blight situation in Dhaka

In the previous two chapters, the setting of urban blight and prevailing efforts to counter urban blight, both for the inner city of Dhaka and the entire city in the South Asian regional context, has been discussed. The discussion sheds some light into the causes that foster urban blight to set in and also elaborates what measures are taken by different actors to address urban blight in Dhaka. It seems, considering the discussions that in reality not much is done to improve the situation from individual and neighborhood scale actors and almost the same scenario is evident in the field of development partners and city as well as state involvement. The state involvement in this case is interesting, as the state level authorities acknowledge their responsibilities to address urban blight, which is bestowed upon them by the present legal and administrative structure, but they are involved in other activities far from improving the living condition in the blighted neighborhoods and the authorities attempt to justify their activities with various reasons. Following this situation, investigation to get answer to the third research question of what can be improved in addressing urban blight put much emphasis to the state level authorities' involvement besides other actors.

This chapter attempts to describe the options that are derived from literatures, other examples in the neighboring countries and also from instantaneous suggestion from different actors developed during the field research. Different options are grouped together depending on the role of different actors to improve the blight situations following the driving forces of blight. Such options are discussed including the pragmatism in the local context. Therefore, in addition to the options the general barriers are also discussed for convenience and to avoid repetition.

6.1 Role of individual actors in improving the situation

Scope of action for the individuals may not be very wide, instead limited considering the prevailing condition. Small action does not mean small return, rather, sometimes small actions can earn much positive return in comparison with large scale actions and associated difficulties. Scope of improvement in respect to different aspects are discussed as follows.

6.1.1 Physical environment and urban services

The scope of Individual residents' action to improve the physical environment and urban services, to the extent needed to have substantial impact in the improvement, appears to be limited due to various reasons. However, there is obviously room for small efforts on the individual scale which may have meaningful impact when comprehended collectively.

The issues of inadequate and poor quality of physical infrastructures and urban services might not be possible for the residents to solve totally and it seems to be out of their capacity, as this problem is dealt by different public and private agencies. Though it sounds logical that the residents collectively might demand for more services and have the capacity to exert pressure on the service providing agencies through political and citizen movement; yet the reality shows that till to date the residents have not succeeded to do so. Of course the scarcity of urban services is a city wide phenomenon which is simply more acute in some areas and the inner city is one of the most suffered areas.

Nonetheless, the residents can take some initiative that are within their scope. For example, the issue of general cleanliness of the area as discussed in the previous chapter. Clearly this is within the scope of the residents' activities. Likewise, some aspects like maintenance of the public spaces as well as private areas like inner courts, management of household and business waste, proper use and handling of infrastructures etc. could be easily cared by individual residents if they really want to do it.

6.1.2 Housing stock

Dilapidated, aging, congested and unhealthy housing stock is considered one of the strongest indicators of the inner city urban blight. Hence improvement of housing stock could have visible and obviously real improvement of the living condition of the area.

Except some exceptions, as discussed in previous chapters, the individual residents are not that much willing to invest in the housing; and they have good reasons by which they are convinced, and some of the reasons have valid ground. Unless they are convinced with better reasons, they are not interested to invest in the housing stock. It appears from long discussions and workshops with the residents that they are not interested in improving the existing housing conditions even if they receive financial and technical aid from external sources unless the financial benefit weighs high enough. Their primary interest is in redevelopment but clearly avoiding the regulations. The intention is clear; they want to make new housing stocks utilizing the maximum floor space to get maximum number of housing units possible simply to avail the maximum of rental value while with minimum consideration for the quality of those housing units. Hence, it is difficult to rely on the intentions of the residents to improve the housing stocks in case they agree.

6.1.3 Social environment, worth and welfare of the of the neighborhood

As mentioned earlier, the residents are quite responsive and considerate about the social environment of the neighborhood. Though the ethnic ground is the basis of all

the social matters, yet it could be said that the residents are happy with the social environment and they act accordingly to keep it sound. It is also observed that the residents appear to be informed about the social worth and welfare of the area, but to some extent reluctant for enhancement. Their simple argument is, the social worth is okay, but it does not bring any material gain that can deliver some tangible improvement of their life, therefore there is no drive to make efforts on their own without any meaningful incentives; from wherever it is. Considering the existing situation, the residents' argument justifies their non-involvement as it appears that the primary motivation is to gain tangible output for any action. If they are not given a better reason, then there is little scope to be hopeful that they would change their mind. However, in a situation where the residents are poor, busy in efforts to earn their livelihood for survival and marginalized in many aspects compared to the privileged communities as well as areas of the city, their attitude is understandable. Hence, without a few exceptions individuals might not be interested to be active without proper incentives.

On the other hand, interviews and results of the workshops with the residents demonstrates that even with external support, which is stated as the main drawback, very few residents would be interested in actions that are purely for the social welfare of the area. Unless the incentives ensure material benefit, the residents cannot afford additional actions beside their livelihood activities. Some of the elderly residents seemed to be interested and enthusiastic about the idea, but at the same time were afraid that the young generation may not be supportive.

6.1.4 Economic strength and business environment

In the previous chapter the residents concern about the economic strength and business environment is discussed. From the discussion it could be said that the individual entrepreneurs have little scope for further improvement by themselves alone in the present condition. In fact, they are already endeavoring their best efforts within their capacity.

6.1.5 Participation in renewal programs

Public participation is increasingly being considered as essential for spatial planning that influence people. Particularly for renewal programs it is being acknowledged as the key to success for achieving tangible improvement of the community's life. Though public participation is rare in south Asian practice, yet it is recognized, at least, officially in planning documents in some cases. For Dhaka, the spatial planning talks about public participation, although there is much doubt in the professional and academic field about this participation while there are numerous examples that the residents are not consulted for the current spatial planning program.

Individual's active participation is the key to success of any renewal program. The residents can help renewal programs by their active participation. Following the consultations with the residents of Shankhari Bazar, it appears that public participation may not work to the extent as it is expected. The residents appeared not to be fully aware of the purpose and procedure of participation. After explaining, they agreed that this is a very good idea that they can take part in the decision making. Although there was confusion, criticism and anxiety among the residents such as it might be difficult to make time, their opinion will not be considered, influential people and politicians will influence the procedure and hinder the public participation process etc. Most of the interviewees from urban activists and scholars expressed their reservation for the success of participation in the local context, the general arguments are that the common people are not qualified to have meaningful opinion, influential local elites and politicians will capture the process and leave their opinion in the name of public opinion to materialize their own vested interest, too much participants could jeopardize the entire step and the risk of non-participation. Presence of too many interested people and, ironically, non-participation could be a problem as it is already observed during the data collection.

6.2 Neighborhood actors in improving the situation

Among the neighborhood scale organizations in the study area the Nagorik Committee holds the position of most powerful, organized, representative and concerned organization. Thus, most of the responsibility of neighborhood action lies with this Nagorik Committee, on one hand, and also lies the residents' expectation for action in relevant neighborhood affairs, on the other hand. Thus, this section is discussed primarily concerning the involvement of the Nagorik Committee.

6.2.1 Physical environment and urban services

The neighborhoods actors also have limited scope to improve the situation for urban services. Compared to the individual actors, this group is probably in a little better position in the sense that they can take necessary actions or organize protest for the neighborhood to exert pressure in the demand for adequate for infrastructures and services.

To improve the physical environment, the Nagorik Committee can have influence in some cases and also take actions as it did before. Considering the usages and maintenance of public properties and services such as public water source, drainage etc., traffic management, general cleanliness etc. the Nagorik Committee can take actions. Such actions could be raising public awareness, suggesting guidelines,

occasional inspection, and correspondence with relevant public/private agencies, fund raising for maintenance and actual maintenance if necessary etc.

The Nagorik Committee itself considers it inactive and shows minimum interest for any kind of involvement in the neighborhood affairs except the *Durga Puza* festival. Though, the Nagorik Committee is primarily involved in affairs inside the neighborhood and no one could tell any event that it has taken some initiative in matters such as demonstration for neighborhood demand etc. Still, considering the actions of the Nagorik Committee in the recent past, it can be hoped that it along with the other CBOs of the area can take actions again for the neighborhood.

6.2.2 Housing stock

Housing stocks are particularly, with only a few exceptions of those demarcated as vested property, private properties and housing improvement is considered the responsibility of the owner. Therefore, CBOs have little scope to have any fruitful efforts to improve the housing stocks.

The Nepal example of BDP shows a good example of involving the community in housing renewal. In BDP the *Guthis*⁵⁸ were involved in building renovation and maintenance with financial and technical support initially from the project and the trend was continued later with support from the municipality. This practice has been proven to be effective. Therefore, this could be followed in renewal programs for Old Dhaka.

6.2.3 Social environment, worth and welfare of the neighborhood

The Nagorik Committee's ability to take initiative to improve the social environment and welfare of the community is already proven. Thus, it is logical to believe that this committee can play a vital role to improve the situation with and also without any renewal program.

The Nagorik Committee is well accepted in the community, consequently it can utilize this acceptance to convince the community in matters relevant for social environment and neighborhood welfare beyond the ethnic issues which is already in practice. For urban renewal programs this Nagorik Committee can be utilized as the key point to keep communication with the community and get feedback. The BDP experience could be followed here.

Although the Nagorik Committee, as stated in several interviews, is to some extent cautious about their readiness and capacity, but for the ethnic matters it is always enthusiastic. And considering their role in the past, it seems to have good potential to

⁵⁸ *Guthis* are community based organizations that are usually responsible to maintain the social and economic affairs of the respective community in the traditional Newar society of Nepal.

involve not only the Nagorik Committee but also other social and cultural organizations in the neighborhood. The Mondir Committees of the area can also be involved.

6.2.4 Economic strength and business environment

The Nagorik Committee considers the improvement of the economic strength and business environment as out of their scope. In absence of any organizations related to the business or artisans here there is little scope for other neighborhood scale organizations to play here.

It might not be impossible to form organizations with the entrepreneurs if necessary supports are provided. at least for the conch shell business this idea has potential, and hopefully such organization can be useful to improve the business environment. For example, this organization can proceed to the relevant government agency to take necessary steps, such as relaxation of duty in shell import, easy access to loan with low or zero interest, promotion of the products nationally and internationally etc. Such organization can cooperate particularly with BSCIC which could bring much benefit to for the entrepreneurs in various forms like training programs, participation in BSCIC fairs etc.

However, without public sector support such ideas have limited potential. It is notable to mention that the entrepreneurs usually do not consider private sector support, particularly NGO involvement, reliable.

6.2.5 Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest, especially interests related to property and land is dealt individually. CBOs consider it entirely out of their scope. They are not even interested to get involved in conflict resolution. The Nagorik Committee is very much pessimistic about conflict resolution and have expressed their frustration about the scenario. It seems to be difficult to improve the scenario without multi sector involvement and willingness of the individuals, understandably the CBOs are minor player in this field.

6.3 City and national actors in improving the situation

As in the existing framework much of the responsibilities to address urban blight are endowed with the city and national level agencies. Thus, this group is probably play the most significant role in any kind of renewal program. This section discusses the options for such agencies, to improve the blight situation, that have been derived from long discussions about the scope of intervention, examples from other countries, ideas from different actors as well as barriers and ways to overcome the barriers etc.

6.3.1 Different authorities' function, urban services and coordination

Statistical data was not checked about the demand, supply and capacity of urban services in different neighborhoods, yet, the residents, scholars, urban professionals and activists and also the urban service providers acknowledged the shortage and uneven distribution of services across the city. They also widely accepted that, specifically in the congested inner city neighborhoods increased and better quality supply of services can improve the existing situation to a great extent.

There is no doubt that the service delivery situations need to be improved, but the question is how. There is no simple answer for that, as the urban professionals and the service providers themselves appear not to be quiet convinced about the possibly and capacity of doing so. A number of barriers are mentioned, such as extremely high congestion of both population and built environment, buildings constructed in such ways that many of them are not compatible to accommodate utility services like electricity or gas connections safely, lack of space to lay down the service lines where in most cases the narrow street is the only public open space available, residents' suffering as well as protests to continue service upgrading works on the streets or service points that takes a while and causes disturbance to their daily life, residents' denial to utilize space under private ownership for services, overuse and abuse of the services, difficulty with ownership that restricts provision of services, complexity with property that restricts land acquisition if needed, limited capacity of service providers and pressure on them to favor specific neighborhoods that brings deprivation to others and obviously lack of resources to increase the supply and improve the quality of urban services etc. And, unfortunately, solving such problems is not so easy.

6.3.2 RAJUK involvement

In the present situation RAJUK holds the main responsibility of improvement of the neighborhood, at least, in the field of built environment, in terms of development, improvement and expansion, and all other agencies are expected to cooperate and coordinate with RAJUK for any kind of development in the concerned area. RAJUK identifies the area as blighted considering the quality of the built environment and particularly the old housing stocks. Involvement and actions of RAJUK therefor, primarily, incorporates the tasks of development control and the physical planning through DAP.

Development control

There is no way to deny that compared to the burden of responsibility of development control, RAJUK suffers from lack of resources whether it is financial, human, willingness or simply initiative. Within this limitation RAJUK has to perform, and to perform effectively, particularly for the task of development control in the inner city, there are

some suggestions by different group of stakeholders. The suggestions emphasize review of the building code to make it suitable for the particular situation in old Dhaka and better performance by RAJUK.

Urban professionals and scholars agree without any hesitation that the current building code cannot, and should not, be applied uniformly across the city. It is designed with the inherent ideal land parcel that prevails in the new Dhaka or, to be more specific, in planned urban area. The underlying reasons are described in different ways by different interviewees. The main line of argument considers this building code as made by and for a particular section of the society where the inner city residents are marginalized. This privileged section of the society is the product of capitalist system, and by virtue of their association and collaboration with power, they attempt to protect the capital as well as the capitalist system in every single possible way. Such argument can be explained with examples of the city situation. In the new Dhaka, both in planned and also unplanned areas, land parcel is bigger and roads are wider compared to the old Dhaka. The building code regulates development primarily with certain floor area ratio, setback and road width. The ratios that fit for bigger parcels do not leave any significant areas for built structure in a small plot which is typical to the old Dhaka. Two types of consequences are observed, either owners of small plots are compelled to sell their lands to big realtors who go for real estate in the combined bigger land, or land owners opt for construction on their own violating the code with or without managing the illegal action in ways such as bribing the concerned RAJUK persons. It is interesting that for some unknown reason the other possible option of combining plots together by the owners has not been considered by them. The concept that the interest of the inner city is neglected in the decision making process because either the decision makers do not belong to or care for the area or the inner city lacks enough representatives in the decision making area is argued repeatedly by different actors, mostly by the academia and inhabitants and also sometimes by decision makers. Beside review of the technical aspects of the building code such as floor area ratio, setback norms, road width etc. consideration for the compatibility of new construction with the surrounding urban fabric also need to be included to guide development in the historical inner city.

The interviewee in the department of Development Control of RAJUK admits that the building code is not appropriate for old Dhaka and needs to be reviewed, however there is least possibility that it would be reviewed in near future. In 2015, at least one representative of the Institute of Architects, Bangladesh IAB mentioned that there has been a consideration in progress to incorporate Transferable development right (TDR) in the building code which could help the inner city dwellers to keep the old buildings without marginalizing their financial benefit. However, till 2017 nothing has been finalized.

Improving the performance of RAJUK in the area of development control with the present capacity is claimed to be difficult by several departments of RAJUK unless the resource base is improved. Accepting the scarcity of resources, scholars, activists and professionals have highly weighed the political willingness and morality of RAJUK. Suggestions also include raising awareness of the people about lawful practice and respect for the traditional urban fabric as well as involving the people in the challenge of development control. Considering the reality of the land and real estate market, as mentioned with some examples in the previous chapter, it can be said that Dhaka's land market is so distorted and the financial gain from real estate is so high that there is limited scope to be optimistic about the ethical practice; whether by RAJUK or the city dwellers. Recommended

Physical planning and DAP

After the DAP is prepared and in practice, any kind of activities related to the built environment in the city is supposed to be guided by the DAP. DAP recognizes Shankhari Bazar as an area of cultural importance and tourism potential. However, DAP also recognizes the Shankhari Bazar as blighted in respect to the physical aspects of the built environment. In DAP the Mughal and colonial architecture of the area is labeled as 'famous' for their narrow width, tall stature and dark/damp interior, and the housing condition is considered as 'extremely unhygienic'. The congested buildings are identified as century old, except a few, and the current 6-7 storied editions are additions on the original 2-3 buildings made of lime and brick chips. Out of the 143 buildings at least 132 are identified as vulnerable and in danger of collapse. In addition to the dilapidated condition of the aging buildings, DAP also identifies some socioeconomic facts that aggravate the situation, such as the diminishing Shankha (conch shell bangles) business forces the entrepreneurs to make their dwellings to rented units and the extreme high demand of housing in this area fuels the renting business.

On this background, DAP has specific proposal for the area. DAP proposes for conservation of 10-15 historically antiquated buildings after declaring them as Heritage. The rest of the area is proposed for total redevelopment under an arrangement of land pooling that makes sure that the residents get serviced flats instead of plots. This land pooling arrangement is suggested to be managed by the government with the help of temporary acquisition of land. The task of motivating the people and keeping their interest in the land pooling arrangement is designated to NGOs. The entire program is conceived as tourism oriented development program with the hope that cultural tourism would be the final outcome and it will bring back the cost of the program.

The DAP proposals could be grouped as conservation and redevelopment through land pooling. The DAP suggestions are considered unrealistic by most of the interviewees

from the academia and urban professionals. The residents are also against it. In particular, the conservation part is supported by most of the interviewees except some urban professionals and the residents. As mentioned earlier that urban renewal is perceived as housing renewal and almost synonymous to conservation in the local context and most of the professionals, activists as well as scholars are enthusiastic about the idea of area wide conservation. However, the implementation of the conservation part is doubted particularly the process of selection, actual conservation and the post program maintenance and rehabilitation which is not mentioned in the DAP.

The few urban professionals and scholars who are not supporting the conservation argues that area wide conservation, particularly in the congested areas of the inner city, is not feasible in the current socioeconomic capabilities and, above all, the unhygienic housing conditions must not be continued for the welfare of the people. For the residents, the idea of conservation is perceived as a suppressing tool imposed to them to support the fancy idea of some elite who never and would never suffer or realize the condition they are living in. The redevelopment part is supported by most of the interviewees except some conservationist urban activist. Although the idea of redevelopment through land pooling is considered next to impossible in the local context of cultural and sentimental attitude towards land ownership as well as in the democratic political system. It has been argued in several dialogues that land pooling with compulsory land acquisition would be possible only under dictatorship. The response of residents about the idea of land pooling offering serviced flat instead of plot is, 'it sounds good but I will not participate'. Nonetheless the residents are enthusiastic about the idea of redevelopment, simply it has to be done by themselves and according to their wish, not guided by the state.

Conservation of Shankhari Bazar is perhaps possible to implement to limited extent. The selection of buildings could be the most difficult task, a sophisticated discourse and research is required to prepare the selection criteria. Protest of the residents perhaps could be minimized by heavy financial compensation and of course counselling. Conservation is very much resource intensive and therefore requires careful consideration. Conservation is a part of urban renewal program and it can be utilized as a trust building tool. In the south Asian tradition of public projects, it is not unusual that the residents feel confused and hesitant to keep trust. In that case, following the most successful urban renewal experience in Nepal, conservation appears to be a powerful tool for trust building (Kleinert, 1977; Haaland, 1982). In the BDP program conservation and physical infrastructure improvement were the efforts that made the community directly involved in the program. However, in all such programs, including the Nepal examples, conservations are done for public buildings only. Ownership

related complications could be proved to be crucial for conservation task in Shankhari Bazar.

Land pooling or land readjustment sounds to be difficult in the local culture. Such tools are difficult everywhere, not only in the Southern cities. Still it is probably not impossible. Land pooling/readjustment is used in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan and also being adopted in Indonesia, Nepal and Malaysia (Archer, 1992). Perhaps the idea of redevelopment following land readjustment is not impossible, but very much time consuming and requires extraordinary efforts from the development agency which is difficult and leaves little scope to be optimistic.

The quality of the proposals and preparation process of DAP is questioned by many of the concerned professionals, activists, academia even some departments of the RAJUK itself. By consulting the local residents, it came clear that they were not consulted for the DAP as claimed by the consultants who prepared DAP. To have plans that follow the aspirations and desires of the local people, there is no other alternative to include the people in the planning process from the very beginning. Albeit the numerous flaws it the only planning document available to guide physical development.

Public participation

Programs to improve the living quality of the inner city neighborhoods directly influence the life of the residents, and if the residents are not included in the process, which is a quiet common practice in the south Asian region, then it becomes difficult to materialize programs and get improvement that the residents desire.

Usually such programs are designed and executed by external agencies, which makes the question legitimate that who feels that changes are necessary and by whom the goals are set? Programs to achieve goals, to change the quality of living in the inner city, if the community have not helped to define then public participation becomes merely manipulation (Cousins, 1980). The arrangement of public participation in planning by RAJUK is similar. In preparation of DAP, the engagement of public participation involves public hearing to resolve people's objections on the prepared draft plan and then the authority decides on the objections. Although the draft plan is supposed to consult the residents for their opinion, however there is little evidence that the consultants, hired for preparing the DAP, have consulted the people, at least not the areas of inner city neighborhoods namely Shankhari Bazar, Tanti Bazar, Tikatuli, Dholaikhal, Bangshal, LaxmiBazar, Gopibagh, Narinda and Wari where interviews are conducted for this research, although it is possible that the interviewees were not interested in the process and did not participate and also not aware of anyone in the vicinity who participated or was informed of any activities related to DAP. RAJUK admits that the present arrangement of public participation is simply a labeling and it is

good to ensure real participation. However, RAJUK seems to have a reservation for participatory planning, it mentions that participatory planning is not possible to practice in the local context; because it will make the planning process more complicated to be managed, this is very much time consuming, the public agencies are not used to and do not have the required capacity and knowledge, and lack of financial resources.

Community participation in programs designed to improve the quality of life is not frequently practiced in the South Asian region. In Sri Lanka there are some examples in the field of tourism oriented business and development programs. Nepal experience is probably the best example of community participation in the field of community development and urban renewal programs. Nepal programs are heavily externally funded and also administered by funding agencies in collaboration with the local agencies. This funding and administration are described as the main barrier for following the public participation model in the Dhaka context by almost all of the experts interviewed; this concern is perhaps not unrealistic.

Albeit there is, at least, one example of true attempt in Bangladesh to incorporate the people in physical planning. The recently started project of Mymensingh Strategic Development Plan (MSDP), 2011-2031 is considering a change in the conceptualization of planning perspective. this project is being conducted by the Urban Development Directorate (UDD) and financial aids are provided from different external sources such as European Union (EU), UK Aid, Norwegian Embassy, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Whereas the conventional planning approach in the country involves the planning agency to set the standard and goals, for the MSDP the planning agency is considering the planning process as a way to materialize the public demand and aspirations where the planning agency is simply the technical body to prepare it with necessary technical skills. For this, Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is considered the tool to collect information from the people and communicate with them. The project leaders mentioned that in the initial stage PRA was proven to be a very successful way to get the peoples desires and aspirations about their localities. This MSDP is still in the initial phase, based on the information plans have been produced and then it would be reviewed by the people before finalization. It is also expected that for the scheduled updating and review of plans, PRA would be utilized again as reviewing tool.

MSDP is in the initial stage and still it cannot be confirmed that PRA has guaranteed the public aspirations in planning, but until now it has been proven to be the most successful instrument to get the knowledge of peoples' desire, according to the project leaders. They have also mentioned that with their previous experience with the conventional planning, that either led by in-house planners or outsourced to

consultants, it was never the peoples' desire in the output. Considering the facts that PRA requires time and resources and the point that MSDP is primarily a donor funded project, the project leaders argues that it is quite possible for the public planning agencies, for example RAJUK, to apply PRA for physical planning within the available resources. PRA also reduces the necessity of outsourcing, however the arrangement of PRA meetings might be necessary to outsource as the planning agencies usually lack manpower to arrange such meetings, and thus, saves resources which can be utilized for planning.

6.3.3 DSCC involvement

DSCC (Dhaka South City Corporation), despite being the municipality, has limited scope of operation in regard to urban affairs of the city. Nonetheless DSCC can do a lot within their scope. In particular, management of open space and some recreational and social facilities are dealt by DCC. In old Dhaka DCC is in charge of 9 parks, 15 libraries, 20 health care centers, 25 community centers and 5 singing learning centers.

Old Dhaka lacks open space and recreational facilities which need to be improved. The situation could be improved in two ways, enhancement of the existing facilities and establishment of additional facilities. Although it is not so easy to make additional open spaces in old Dhaka, launching other recreational facilities might be comparatively less complicated.

The available public open spaces are not always well maintained. The DSCC owns 13 parks in the old Dhaka and not all of them are practically open space any more, even some of them have been destroyed by DSCC itself. DSCC mentions that they are willing to improve the condition but they cannot not do it due to lack of financial resources. Again, in the planning document, it is mentioned that more open spaces must be made available for the residents, however it is not mentioned how to do it. Old Dhaka is congested, the buildings are mostly low rise and with almost 100% plot coverage. The recent trend is to make high rise buildings replacing the old low rise buildings and sometimes it is done merging several small plots which does not leave open space that is large enough even for play area for the children of those high rise buildings. There is almost no space left in old Dhaka that can be utilized as public open space, unless land acquisition is considered, which is extremely difficult and not considered as an option for open space by the city authorities. (See 4.4.1 and 4.3.2 for more)

The river front is a great opportunity to offer recreational facilities. For some unknown reasons, this opportunity is not really considered, at least in activities on the relevant authorities although this is suggested in the DAP. Instead, the river is abused and encroached by everyone who could manage to do it, even the public authorities

concerned, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) itself for example (Roy, 2009d).

The river is, somehow as it appears, considered more for practical use rather than recreation. To clarify, it is the major transportation route and all the bazars that require transportation in bulk are placed on the river, this is the case not only for Dhaka, but a countrywide feature. The cities are established on the river, however not facing the river, rather leaving it behind as a service route. Probably flooding and erosion are the concern that keeps the human settlement away from the river. Despite, river is utilized as a source of recreation in various ways like traditional boat race, boat journey or simple walking space on the shore. The river Buriganga is now a river of polluted water, not suitable for recreational facilities as it offered in the past. This could be a recreation place if properly maintained, at least comparing with the recent example of Hatirjheel project in the central Dhaka, it is not impossible, though difficult.



Plate 41: Polluted Buriganga with murky water (left) and Hatirjheel lake after development (right).

Source: Photo credit (left) The Daily Star (2008d) and (right) Prabir Das in Yusuf (2013).

Library, gymnasium, theater, circus, cinema, exhibition, fair etc. are other forms of traditional recreational facilities in Dhaka besides religious and social festivals. Theme park, cineplex, music concert etc. are very much recent addition in the recreational life of the city dwellers. The latest recreational facilities are not, usually, established in the old Dhaka on the consideration that the people cannot afford such facilities, as believed by the urban scholars, professionals and the residents of old Dhaka. The traditional recreational facilities are under threat of market pressure in respect of economic return. For example, cinema is shrinking from the city as well as countrywide, because it is not a profitable business anymore and cinema halls are being replaced by shopping malls which is more profitable. For example, the Gulistan Cinema Hall which was the first modern cinema hall in Dhaka established in 1950s and considered to be a symbol of the city has been replaced by a shopping complex in 2001. Neighborhood scale library, gymnasium etc. are also being converted to housing or commercial use on the concern

of financial return by the land owners. Therefore, such facilities need public support to survive and thrive.

In recent years social and religious festivals have revived and started to regain their lost glory. For example, the Bengali new year festival is not only limited to some neighborhoods in the old Dhaka, rather it is a city wide festival now. Similarly *Halkhata*, *Chaitra Sankranti*, *Eid* rally, *Janmastami* rally etc. are increasingly being celebrated in greater scale. There is a tendency to remember the glory of old Dhaka only during the festival period and then forget the area next day which need consideration. Such festivals offer opportunities to incorporate old Dhaka more in the entire city life and DSCC can play significant role in supporting these.

6.3.4 Conservation of built and cultural heritage and relevant authorities

Conservation is a significant component of urban renewal programs. Though in the South Asian region, urban renewal is perceived, as evident from the different examples, to a great extent as conservation of some isolated built structures which are mostly publicly owned. Conservation also requires a great deal of sophisticated discussion and debate to determine the selection criteria; where usually architecture, history and potential of tourism play vital role.

Considering the other examples of small and large scale conservation examples in the region, such as the cases of Bhaktapur in Nepal, Lahore in Pakistan, Shahjahanabad in Delhi etc., the case of Dhaka appears to have less potential for large scale conservation, though it is the main agenda from the conservationist urban activists, professionals as well as some of the scholars which is also reflected to some extent in the DAP. It is also necessary to consider the residents' interest and attitude about conservation while very few, as inferred from the interviews in Shankhari Bazar and some other inner city neighborhoods, of them are in favor of conservation leaving the majority in opposition. Also considering the conservation experience in Bangladesh, namely Panam Nagar and Ahsan Manjil, Nimtoli Deuri, Llabagh fort etc., lack of expertise and obviously resources pose sever constrains for large scale conservation work. (See 5.3.7 for more)

The DAP suggests for limited and specific conservation, for example it mentions that a certain portion of the Shankhari Bazar area as well as some particular buildings in old Dhaka will go under conservation etc. It seems more practical in the local context. However, it is yet to be identified what would be the selection criteria for buildings worth conservation, who would identify them, who would do the conservation work and how, how funds would be arranged, what would be the post conservation use and maintenance, what would be the property right afterwards etc. And as identified in the interviews, none of the involved actors are quite clear about it and to some extent are skeptical about the feasibility of implementation. On the other hand, DAP proposals

are quite conflicting with the RAJUK gazette of protection of buildings and area that deserve protection and conservation in some cases. Thus, there seem to be not much light at the end of the tunnel, although the academia is much optimistic about the future and considers that conservation would be the next field of interest and implementation as well as new design field is getting saturated quickly and due to the increasing awareness of acknowledgement and preservation of the local history and culture.

With the issues of conservation, a question arises that who will take responsibility as well as it is a public responsibility. Although there is no simple answer, but in the study context it seems more practical to consider it as a public responsibility as far as possible with due compensation policy so the individual owners do not get affected. At the same time, conservation must not be limited to conservation only, proper maintenance and possibility of income generation must be a part of the conservation plan. Again conservation should be considered in relation with or as part of wider development program and not separately.

6.3.5 Traditional business and BSCIC involvement

According to some members of the BSCIC the businesses in Shankhari Bazar as well as in neighboring areas could be considered as traditional business and handicrafts, as mentioned in detail in the previous chapter. And therefore caring of these businesses and industries fall under the scope of BSCIC, although at present BSCIC is not considering this in the working agenda.

In long discussions with the members of BSCIC it was understood that almost all the businesses in the study area are somehow labeled and known in the society as religious products regardless of their real association with religion and this labeling inhibits large scale marketing of the products in the wider society. And for this, BSCIC also has a reservation for promoting the products. In the reality, only a few products are directly related to Hindu religion like the *shankha*, *baniaty*, ritual items etc. most of the products are traditional items that belong to the deep rooted rural culture of Bengal region. BSCIC has to take the lead in this regard. BSCIC can take initiative to promote products as cultural and traditional objects beyond their religious connotation. For some products this would be quite easy as these are not associated with religion and they are solely traditional objects, like the cork sheet crafts, kites, metal home appliances etc. For products that are associated with religion, it is not impossible and it is important to promote them also as a part of the ancient local culture, and this fact is historically proven. For examples, the culture of using *shankha* and *sindoor* (vermilion) as a symbol of being married is practiced primarily by the followers of Hindu community and therefore recognized today as Hindu culture in the wider society. However, this culture

is also practiced by women in different tribes and religion. Again this culture is the very ancient non-Aryan local culture that was adopted by the Aryans and in course of time this has been recognized as a part of Hinduism. Thus, it is not improper or unethical to revive this practice as a symbol of culture practiced by the sons of the soil. Discussions with the BSCIC members revealed that they are aware of the facts that the businesses have the potential of being branded as traditional and cultural objects and can go beyond their religious connotation. They have also recognized that such promotion can have real improvement in the community's life by improving their economic strength. Product promotion and marketing in wide scale is not done by BSCIC, and it is not the ultimate necessity. BSCIC could arrange regular training programs for the enterprises and allot some stalls in each of the regular fairs, arrangement of special fairs or exhibition particularly for such products and campaigns would be very much useful. Discussions with the entrepreneurs and urban activists also point towards such programs. BSCIC although do not have any such scheme currently but as it was understood from the discussions with different interviewees there that the suggestions mentioned here are within their scope.

BITAC and SME Foundation could also be involved in programs to support the entrepreneurs. Even though traditional business and handicrafts are not in the priority sector of BITAC and SME Foundation, yet they can support such business with technical knowhow if applicable and financial scheme.

6.3.6 Noxious industries and relevant authorities' involvement

A consensus is observed in the opinions of almost all the interviewees that the noxious industries in the inner city must be restricted. However, there is no concrete and realistic proposal by any of the actors group on how to do it; always relocation is seen as the simple solution and implementation is the responsibility of the government.

Relocation is probably as much difficult to implement as easy to say. Noxious industries and business in the city core is a very common phenomenon in the South Asian and, similarly, relocation, also, is a very much common proposal in the planning documents as a simple solution to the inner city problems. Yet there is no example of successful relocation scheme of such enterprises. In the case of Dhaka, the relocation of Hazaribagh Tannery Estate is being discussed for last 4 decades, and even after preparing a new tannery industrial park by the government about a decade ago, still relocation has not taken place. After the Nimtali tragedy it was expected that some real progress would take place at least with the chemical industries and warehouses exerting fire risk. Unfortunately, nothing is achieved at the cost of 112 lives. (See 5.3.9 and 4.4.84.4.8 for more).

In the case of old Delhi, relocation of some business is being suggested continuously for almost half a century, without any effective results. Relocation is implemented in very much limited scale in only a few cases, for example the relocation of cloth market in the inner city of Karachi and the relocation of cycle market in old Delhi, although the relocated businesses were not really noxious or hazardous in nature.

In the detail study area of Shankhari Bazar and adjacent areas, the industries and businesses are not really harmful or hazardous in nature, they are mostly craft based enterprises. However, beside the infamous Hazaribagh tannery estate, in other parts of the city core, Dholaikhal, Lalbagh, Islambagh, Imamganj, Begumbazar, Amligola, Kamalbagh etc. just to name a few, there are numerous noxious industries, such as foundry and metal works, chemical, plastic, battery, firecrackers etc. that pose high risk for the inhabitants. Following the discussions with industry owners and the owners' association, it is clear they have no intention to move on their own. Renting the residential units to such noxious business is also seen as more profitable for a large number of house owners. Public authorities that are involved in this field seem to have minimum concern. Also considering the local and regional context rapid and mass scale relocation of noxious business appears to be unrealistic.

For the sake of the life of the inner city residents, it is clear that the noxious industries must be cleared from the old city. However, it has to be done on an incremental basis. Instead of rapid and mass scale relocation, as always suggested, some other alternative options could be considered. The industries could be graded according to the severity threats they exert to the neighborhood. And then according to this grading, priority could be fixed for small scale relocation and rehabilitation of those with greatest risk. Gradually less harmful industries could run with caution and technical support must be provided to improve the production process to minimize the risk and pollution they emit. Awareness raising programs for the residents might also help to prevent renting business to noxious industries and get peoples cooperation during relevant authority's action against such industries. In this regard, it is important that when the house owners are more concerned and obviously have a better financial strength then such rent business has more and more possibility to diminish. It is necessary to consider relocation as a rehabilitation scheme. Another option could be designate some areas for industrial use. Areas currently with most dense concentration of industries, Islambagh and Begumbazar for example, could be earmarked for industrial use and industries from other areas could be relocated here. However, this would imply numbers of considerations mostly related with providing necessary services for an industrial zone. Firefighting could be the most challenging considering the road network. For this some different ways of firefighting could be considered instead of conventional dependency on fire truck. The river basin could be used for firefighting if the industrial area is

earmarked on the river bank area. The entrepreneurs are generally not willing to move to a remote area because they want to utilize the advantage of the reputation and business environment of old Dhaka. Thus, earmarking an area for industrial use in the old Dhaka has a better possibility of implementation. There are already at least two industrial areas along the river, although not officially designated, in Shyampur – Postogola belt for medium to heavy industries and Keranigang area, on the southern bank of the river, that houses primarily small scale and some medium scale industries. Instead of earmarking an industrial zone on the northern bank, which means in the old Dhaka, the southern bank of the river could also be considered for industrial use, the entire Kamrangir Char could be considered for this.

For the mentioned actions relevant business and industrial authorities, like BSCIC, BITAC, the Ministry of Industries, SME Foundation, FBCCI, MCCI, DCCI, business owners' associations etc. service providing authorities, safety concerned authorities like Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defense, Department of Explosive etc., RAJUK and DSCC have to work together. The Ministry of Industries and RAJUK could initiate the process and then later courses of action could be identified. However, involving all these authorities and coordinating is a very difficult task in the local context.

6.4 External actors in improving the situation

External actors are not much active particularly in the support to fight against urban blight in Bangladesh. But, there is a great potential in this field and if the actors' active participation could be ensured then hopefully great deal of improvement could be made.

6.4.1 NGO and urban activists' involvement

NGOs and urban activists, although are primarily involved in development affairs in the rural areas, are vocal and active in many urban affairs in the city and they have achieved success in many cases in varying extent. Thus, it could be hoped that if they also consider inner city urban renewal in their scheme then they it might bring some benefit for the city dwellers. In the DAP a lot of tasks are bestowed upon the NGOs for the inner city development projects. Particularly for the Shankhari Bazar development project, a great deal of tasks, as mentioned in earlier sections, are bestowed upon NGOs. Also for some other projects that are proposed in DAP for the improvement of some other distressed neighborhoods in the old Dhaka, again NGOs are expected to take a great deal of responsibility. However, as it appears from the planning documents as well as from real life practice it becomes clear that it is simply responsibilities bestowed upon the NGOs without any accountability. NGOs that are interviewed are not likely to accept that they should be accountable to the public or public authorities in an

institutional manner, instead they claim that due to the activities of the NGOs the public institutions and the government eventually are compelled to show some extent of accountability; hence it is not necessary to make them accountable to any public institutions as they are accountable to the people. Lack of responsibility in the public realm is a national crisis and the claim of government's and public institutions' limited accountability due to the NGOs and other advocacy groups is not entirely illogical, yet such organizations' accountability which is still not institutionally ensured is a matter of debate. However, about the accountability and transparency of NGOs, perhaps, everyone else except themselves are skeptical. The inner city residents are very much doubtful about the NGOs. This lack of trust deserves careful consideration in planning of any program that involves NGOs. Some urban scholars and urban professionals argue that the NGOs lack accountability and do much little compared to their publicity and claims, but still they have strong network and capacity to organize and make connection with the root level people, and therefore it is quite beneficial to utilize these capacities for public funded development projects.

6.4.2 Urban scholars' involvement

For urban scholars it is mainly private scale of involvement in the urban affairs mostly due to academic interest. And also for individuals just equipped with academic knowledge it becomes difficult to bring large scale change in the urban affairs unless they are consulted or made involved in such urban programs that are mostly public in scope. Professional bodies are in a better position to take some actions. IAB and BIP are relevant professional bodies in this field. Although observing their activities it does not appear that they are much concerned about the inner city urban blight situation and has any future plan about this. These two institutes can play similar functions like the NGOs.

6.4.3 Development partners' involvement

Active participation of development partners could be of vital importance in the fight against urban blight and in programs to improve the quality of life in distressed urban areas. Not only financial support, technical support is also important. The Nepal experience shows that with the help of development partners it is possible to materialize large scale urban renewal and community development programs. However, besides the financial and technical support from the development partners, it is also important to consider the development partners' perspective and control over the programs. There is evidence in different fields that, in many cases, donor funded projects reflect their own perspective. Moreover, frequently, conditions and/or standards are set and projects are administered in such ways by the donors that in the end results are not the best suitable for the local context and deviates from the intended goals. While the

Nepal example is praiseworthy, urban renewal program in Lahore and Karachi has resulted merely in restoration of just a few public buildings (see 3.4). Nevertheless, for countries like Bangladesh, with much sever needs than inner city urban renewal where the government struggles to finance those priority fields, development partners are, perhaps, the most important source of external resources. Initiative to stimulate the development partners has to be taken by the government. The Planning Commission, in association with the Ministry of Housing and Public works and Ministry of Social Welfare, has to take the lead in this field.

6.4.4 International organizations' involvement

International organizations that take the leading role in initiatives for protecting and enhancing places with heritage value of various types as well as significance considering a variety of aspects, such as UNESCO World Heritage Center, UN Habitat etc. could have taken part in the case of Dhaka also. However, for urban renewal concern, this has not been realized. Old Dhaka, according to the urban scholars and professionals, does not have the quality and potential to be considered as world heritage due to various reasons. It is also mentioned by most of the interviewees that the only possibility in this regard was with the Lalbagh Fort, which lost the opportunity of being a world heritage site due to faulty restoration (see 5.3.7). They have and there is little hope that the inner city area or certain streets like Shankhari Bazar can be considered for taking action by UNESCO World Heritage Center. However, probably for the UN Habitat there is a better scope of taking a lead in renewal program. But unfortunately, UN Habitat in Bangladesh is predominantly concerned with issues like urban poverty alleviation, community empowerment, urban planning with considering different issues like climate change resilience, environment concern, disaster management etc. and urban renewal is not their primary consideration, as understood from the discussion with the representative. It is the same scenario with UNDP as well. All these international agencies are taking part in the development activities of Bangladesh with a range of issues and the setting of priority is prepared by their own criteria. Unfortunately, urban renewal with a comprehensive perspective is not in the agenda.

6.5 Common barriers of improving the situation

To understand the role of different actors and different actions that could be considered for improving the urban blight situation in Dhaka, particularly with the example of Shankhari Bazar, it could be helpful to have some idea about the barriers of improving the situation. Numbers of barriers are there, some are really conventional, like lack of resources, where some are specifically context related, like the problems with property ownership. Yet, despite the singularity of the Shankhari Bazar case, these barriers could be regarded as common problems the South Asian contexts.

6.5.1 Conflict of interest

Das (1983, as cited in Verma, 1993) has identified at least five areas on conflict that hampers inner city renewal in association with the Indian experience; these conflict areas are also applicable in the Dhaka context.

First, there is a conflict between the interests of property owners and property users. Mostly for change in occupancy, or use pattern and improvement of the property, and any other intervention in the area that add additional value to the property which might increase the cost of property use, such conflict appears to be acute. To be more specific, the property users, in most cases, are interested in interventions for renewal only when it does not add to the cost they pay for using the property; otherwise, the property users, except only a few who can afford the additional cost, are against or willing to or have already involved into protest against such interventions. On the other hand, property owners are more interested in interventions that would bring them more financial benefit either from a new occupancy pattern or use or increasing the rent of the property. Tenants of Shankhari Bazar in particular and some inner city neighborhoods have expressed this sort of opinion. Another example is available from the fringe area of Dhaka in the Uttar Khan area where the residents are against the annexation of DNCC jurisdiction as this will increase their tax despite the benefit of municipality urban services. However, unlike India, voice of the tenants, who struggle to survive, are much weaker than the interest of the owners, who are more interested to put their property in the open market, in the context of Dhaka.

Second, there is a conflict between residential and commercial interests. Juxtaposition of commercial and residential use is a traditional pattern in this subcontinent not only in urban areas but also in the rural areas, commercial activities are considered as the source of livelihood for the neighborhoods, and also there are always some areas dedicated for particular commercial activities. Obviously changes in the nature of commercial activities, such as from harmless wooden furniture making to hazardous chemical industry or foundry workshop, deteriorates the quality of living in the neighborhoods. Also it is factual that financial gain from commercial use is higher than residential use which attracts conversion of land use, and in addition to that inner city accommodating the most intensive mixed land use helps commercial use to set and hide in the clutter that could not be operate in many other areas. But on the other hand, the professionals' perception of commercial use as an indication of urban blight and the desire for commerce free neighborhood disrupts the established traditional and indigenously evolved balance among various uses in the inner city neighborhoods and could be considered as impractical as well as imposed to the residents. Thus, conflict between commercial and residential use is multifaceted.

Third, there is a conflict between housing objectives and overall urban planning objectives. Das (1983) describes that housing agencies, 'authorities' or 'boards' look for alternatives such as 'cheap' residential redevelopments, building repairs and upgrading etc. on one hand, while overall urban objectives attempt to set alternatives based on 'optimal' use of high-value land on the other hand. In the Dhaka context, however, housing authorities are less interested in the housing development in the inner city, whereas the planning agency and the municipality are more considerate about the housing situation in the inner city areas but their consideration, again, mostly fall into offering housing redevelopment and upgrading besides setting and regulating housing standards, at least as it is evident in the current planning document. Ironically, the planning agency acknowledges that the present urbanization trend in the inner city is far away from what such valuable, in all means, part of the city could accommodate and desired from the planning perspective.

Fourth, there is a conflict between the objective and capacity within both the public and private sector. This gap between the objective and capacity does not arrive from the lack of financial resources only, very often there are many other reasons. Lack of qualified professionals and technological knowhow, for instance, causes great drawback that limit the success of various agencies involved in renewal intervention. Planning school, in Bangladesh, was first established in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology⁵⁹ (BUET) in 1968 for post graduate studies only and the Bachelor course was offered only in 1996. Bachelor course was offered in first in Khulna University (KU) in 1991. That means the planning profession in just a few decades old in the country. Conservation and restoration efforts in Bangladesh could also elaborate the lack of capacity. The Department of Archeology under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs is in charge of all the designated archeological sites⁶⁰ across the country and has implemented several building restoration projects, however there is severe lack of professionals and technical knowledge in this field, also in the universities architectural conservation is not taught as a subject, the only opportunity is the Department of Archeology in Jahangir Nagar University (JU). Lack of knowledge has impaired some restoration projects and even many of such projects are criticized for faulty restoration losing the authentic style.

Fifth, there is a conflict between planning intention and political will. Das (1983) mentions that very often there exists lack of political willingness to undertake major

⁵⁹ BUET, founded in 1912, is the oldest institution in Bangladesh in the field of technical education.

⁶⁰ Department of Archeology only maintains sites and structures as designated by them. However, a comprehensive list of sites and structures with archeological, historical, heritage and cultural value does not exist, and also there is no set and standard criterion to prepare such a list, nor exist any authority to prepare such a list. To date, archeological or heritage structures have been guided by the Antiquities Act, 1968.

reforms that planners perceive as necessary. This lack of political willingness not necessarily belongs only to the politicians, who in turn might refer to the political government as the case of representative democracy in the local context; even the planning agencies and the bureaucracy also might lack willingness for planning efforts as well as major reform. On one hand, spatial planning is a political process and a political tool as well, on the other hand, very often higher positions in planning and relevant agencies are considered, by scholars, activists, residents and professionals as well, as political and to implement political agenda. RAJUK, the spatial planning agency in Dhaka, has acknowledged the tremendous political pressure on it for and against particular programs and projects and the helplessness of the agency to undertake planning efforts that are considered necessary and appropriate for the city. In addition, as mentioned by bureaucrats from several public authorities, the bureaucracy itself follows the colonial legacy and opts for programs with vested interest and the wellbeing of the general people are considered with less priority, some programs are prepared that only pretend to be for public interest but not necessarily in real scope. Construction of flyovers to reduce the terrible traffic congestion situation instead of improving the existing public transport and utilizing the railway system inside the city could illustrate the situation mentioned.

6.5.2 Resource constraints

Resource constraints is not unique to Bangladesh only or South Asian region, it is a typical Third World problem. And obviously not only inner city intervention, but many other development programs are affected by resource constraints. Nonetheless, in the local context where inner city problems are rarely considered as vital and worthy of wide scale intervention, clearly it becomes easier for such program to be limited in scope.

Verma (1993) points that, solutions cheaper and limited in scope as well as coverage for inner city renewal programs are largely produced by the resource constraints while such solutions are not appropriate nor adequate. Though lack of resources is not the only reason for interventions limited in scope and coverage, however it makes such discussions to be easily made; owing to the facts that such decisions are, very often, politically less sensitive, easier to be made in the legal and administrative setup and perceived as less complicated from the perspective of implementation. More than the lack of resource itself, more acute problem observed in case of inner city renewal is lack of efforts for resource mobilization and very often limited interventions are largely spring from wider policy perspective of the problem. Such theoretical discussions are supported in the examples of South Asian examples. Particularly for Dhaka, such notions are supported by the interviewees of relevant group of actors.

Besides resource mobilization and lack of interests to take initiative for resource mobilization, for inner city renewal, issues of cost recovery and tenure which is closely related to cost recovery and post program maintenance receive notably less attention, as believed by Verma (1993). Cost recovery and maintenance are missing in almost all the examples of renewal intervention in this region with just one exception in the BDP where the community is involved in maintenances with occasional support and monitoring from the municipality and other urban authorities. In case of Bangladesh, maintenance is perhaps never considered in most development programs, which is particularly true for public funded programs. Perhaps this is the tradition, as mentioned by the interviewees from different groups including public agencies, that the public sector development projects are funded and implemented with least care and maintenance is never considered as a part showing the excuse of lack of resources; and soon the project get out of order which paves the way for another project and at the end it is a huge loss and misuse of resources that is much greater that it would have been required for proper maintenance. In this regard, it is also believed by almost all the interviewees, except those in the concerned public agencies, that this lack of post program maintenance that paves the way for more projects is deliberately designed to make the water muddy; to make it easier for corruption.

Verma (1993) also mentions the irony of resource potential of inner cities offered for renewal programs by mentioning that despite the inner cities being 'money spinners' the turnover does not contribute to their development. This appears to be true not only for the Indian case, but also for inner cities in other South Asian cities and this fact very often leads to uneven development in the city. Thus, Verma (1993) points out that resource potential of inner cities affects the choice of interventions and very often makes such interventions viewed the same as other interventions when they should be viewed differently, even though they are viewed differently when they should be viewed as same due to resource constraints.

A vital question in the discussion of resource constraints for inner city renewal is raised by Verma (1993), 'to what extent should renewal be a purely public sector intervention?' This is indeed a crucial question yet to be answered where the role and interests of private sector actors, such as users, owners, entrepreneurs etc. are of significant importance in renewal programs. From the discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, for this research based in Dhaka, no clear answer could be retrieved, rather this was even a question raised by many of the interviewees. However it appears that on one hand, for the private actors, for understandable reasons, renewal is viewed certainly as a public sector responsibility; on the other hand, for the public sector alone certainly renewal is beyond the capacity of available resources.

6.5.3 Perception and priority of urban renewal

As discussed several times in preceding chapters, in the context of Bangladesh, urban blight seems to be perceived as insignificant, in one hand, and urban renewal appears to be housing renewal concentrating on building conservation, on the other hand, by most of the actors involved in the situation; with extremely rare exceptions from the academia. Both issues, priority and perception, limit the coverage and scope of urban renewal for blighted neighborhoods in various ways.

Perception of urban blight seems to be directed by the quality of physical and built environment, with marginal attention to the socio-economical state. Moreover, such perception also appears to consider simply the impacts, while the causes of urban blight are not the in the focus of consideration. Consequently, actions to counter urban blight focus more in treating the impacts instead of addressing the roots of blight. Therefore it is not inconsistent when the DAP depicts urban blight in the inner city neighborhoods primarily with poor quality of housing, congested environment and poverty and then the proposed urban renewal is limited to redevelopment with partial conservation, road widening and looking for microcredit options by some NGOS or other microcredit institutions.

6.5.4 Property related complexity

Property related complexities that hinder inner city renewal are complex and multifaceted. Not only problems related to property ownership, discussed briefly in previous chapters, other complexities with land acquisition, land administration, residents' attachment and attitude about their land etc. become serious issues during any intervention for inner city renewal. Such problems are, again, not exclusive to Bangladesh rather common in the South Asian region.

Land acquisition

In many cases, land acquisition becomes a necessity for development programs. Though, land acquisition is not an easy process. Public authorities are under severe pressure against acquisition from various levels of the society and administration. Compensation is also expensive and complicated process with very high possibility, and most often there are, of corruption. Also the residents reserve all the rights to go to the court against the acquisition and such cases goes on for years without any settlement. For such reasons, public authorities like RAJUK always prefers to seek for solutions that do not require land acquisition. There are many examples in the city, also in the other areas, where projects could not be completed or even sometimes initiated due to complexities with land acquisition, the case of a new airport in Munsiganj is an example.

In 2010 the government decided to build a new airport in the wetland of *Arial Beel*⁶¹ in the Munshiganj district and ordered land acquisition. The project was rejected by the local people, for whom the wetland was the agricultural land, and they protested violently (The Daily Star, 2011d). The project had to be abandoned after several people including police were killed in the mayhem.

The situation is not less complicated if not more in the inner city, where rarely any intervention to improve the living condition could be considered, as mentioned by RAJUK and DSCC representatives.

Ownership

The way that ownership problems restricts property owners to develop housing condition are described briefly preceding chapters. Besides, this ownership problem also restricts development in other ways. Urban services are not, usually, provided to disputed lands. On the other hand, urban services available at the parcel of land are utilized to establish or regularize the ownership status. These facts restrain urban service providers to provide basic services to the slum areas, which results into illegal connection of services and the ultimate sufferer are the slum dwellers who eventually pay much higher than other residents for the same urban services. Ownership dispute also leads to legal complexity. Whenever there are many owners, either rightful or simply claiming to be rightful, of a particular property and there is an initiative for some development program, it may not benefit all the owners. And it is quite common practice that if there is even a single owner is unhappy then he goes to the court and the court issues a stay order. Eventually the development program gets disrupted. Bitter experience of legal intricacy in many projects, Hatirjheel, Purbachal, Uttara 3rd phase for example, poses reservation in idea of having any development program in the inner city, as mention repeatedly by RAJUK interviewees and also other authorities.

Land management

Land management itself is a complicated procedure. According to Rahman (2008) this procedure has become more complicated in Bangladesh as the system lacks clarity and is flooded by numbers of laws and institutions. Rahman (2008) has depicted the complicated system in brief.

The basic framework of land management includes issues of tenure, ownership, registration, transfer, subdivision, records and taxation. All these issues are again interrelated. While the tenure, ownership and subdivision of land is complex and not clear in many cases, bureaucratic complexity settles and gets acute form in the issues of registration, records and taxation of land. Particularly the land record, which is the

⁶¹ Beel means large tract of wetland. Usually such wetlands remain under water for several months from the monsoon and only keep dry in the winter when seasonal agriculture takes place. Ari

basis for most of the land related issues, is a tedious, complicated and time consuming procedure that involves numbers of institution. Consequently, land record system invites and nourishes corruption and this sector is popularly believed to initiate and host all the land related corruption. Rahman (2008) also mentions a Transparency International , Bangladesh (TIB) survey that reports corruption and dissatisfaction of people with the concerned agencies related to land registration, records and administration.

The institutional arrangement for land management first started to be materialized formally during the British rule with the formation of Board of Revenue in 1772. At present, beside the Ministry of Land there are at least six more ministries involved in the land management system. Rahman (2008) summarizes the ministries and their major responsibilities and shows their relation in the land management which is presented in the following table and diagram.

Table 7: Responsibility of different departments in different ministries involved in land management in Bangladesh.

Ministry	Departments and their major responsibilities
Ministry of land	Directorate of Land Records and Survey, Land Reform Board, Deputy Commissioners / Collectors of Land: Records of rights, mutation of ownership / transfer of land, collection of land tax, settlement of government owned land, survey and mapping, land disputes etc.
Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affaires	Collection of immovable property tax. Litigations related to lands in urban and rural areas.
Ministry of Housing and Public Works	Public Works Department, National Housing Authority, Urban Development Directorate
Ministry of Environment and Forests	Department of Forestry, Department of Environment
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Communications	Department of Roads and Highways
Ministry of Railways	
Ministry of Finance	Collection of income tax on properties in urban areas

Source: Rahman (2008).

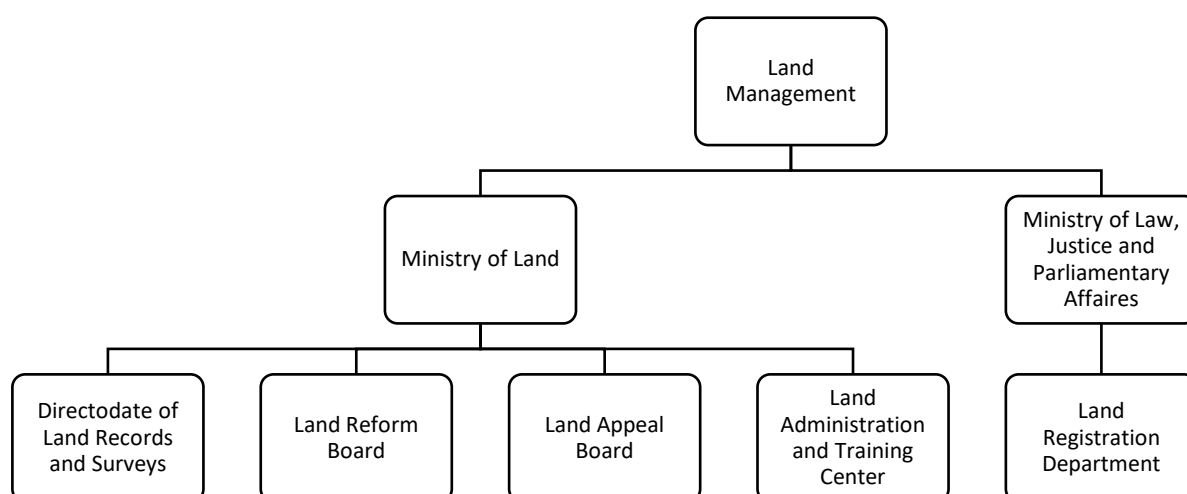


Figure 38: Ministries and agencies involved in land management in Bangladesh.

Source: Rahman (2008).

Complicacy of land management and relevant bureaucratic difficulties could easily be assumed simply observing institutional arrangement while the plethora of land related laws generously contribute to make it acute. Interviewees in some public departments, namely UDD, DSCC, RAJUK and PWD, has mentioned the complexity of the land management system and how it affects decisions on urban development. Concerned authorities tend to avoid and/or limit urban development decisions that requires land management to get rid of the long bureaucratic procedures and for obvious reasons this tendency affects the quality of urban development decision in the first place well before the difficulties of the implementation stage.

Attitudes and attachment towards land

Attachment with land is very strong and, possibly, takes a very special role in the life of the people in this Ganges delta region. May be this happens because of the close linkage between the agriculture based livelihood and lifestyle. Land and agriculture is at the center of the life for the vast majority of rural population for centuries. Although for the very recently developed and few exclusively urban population, land may not be directly linked with everyday life, however, in most cases their owned agricultural land back in the village supports their urban life in various ways. Also possessing a parcel of land, whatsoever small is the size, exerts dignity and acceptance in the social status. Interestingly, in Bangladesh a piece of land, in the form of having a permanent address, is considered required in many official matters, such as passport. Landless people are not excluded from the society, but have a low social status in the society. Last, but not least, the value of land as a business commodity is extremely high. In this agrarian

society, for various and understandable reasons, the bond between land and people is something special.

This bondage is reflected in people's reaction if they have to give up the title of land. Selling land is the last option, in most cases, for people in a financial crisis. Particularly, if for any development program private land is to be acquired by any public agencies, people react vigorously. Not only for land acquisition, also in case of other land related conflicts, people's vision is very simple, they would prefer their blood over the land. Beside the land acquisition, people also hesitate and quite often do not trust that someone, either public or private agency, would develop their land properly.

This kind of attachment makes it difficult to materialize spatial development projects. Particularly in a small and overpopulated country like Bangladesh where land is perhaps the scarcest resource and it is extremely difficult to materialize any spatial development project sparing land under private ownership.

6.5.5 Inner city problem in the wider city framework

Inner city problems do not belong to the inner city exclusively. Many of the problems are and should be viewed in the wider city framework. Problems such as conflicting interests of different actors, complications due to extensive mixed land use, concentration of informal economic activities, scarcity of urban services etc. are part of the city scale problems while some problems are exclusive to the inner city, quality of housing and lack of open space for example. Similarly, inner city interventions also should be viewed in the wider city framework apart from those that are particularly applicable for the inner city. In examples of the few renewal experiences in South Asia, a clear tendency is observed to approach the inner city intervention as piecemeal solution confined to the particular area or in most cases to particular built environment. The examples in Bombay (Mumbai), Lahore and Panam Nagar are exclusively built structure oriented. Even the long and continuous urban renewal scheme for Shahjahanabad is also recognized for lacking wider perspective and the interventions are seen as fragmented. For meaningful inner city renewal program retrospective interventions concerning housing and related problems could focus the particular area while retrospective interventions concerning other urban functions and prospective interventions for inner city planning are not only desirable but necessarily need to be substantially broader perspective based.

6.5.6 Political willingness

There are many obvious reasons that hinders urban renewal as well as urban development considerations particularly in the Southern cities such as resource constraints, socio-economic constraints, administrative and legal complexities etc.

Admitting all these, many of the urban scholars consider political willingness as one of the most important factors that influences urban renewal programs. All of the interviewed urban professionals and some urban scholars agreed that political willingness is the key factor and many other barriers could be alleviated and tackled if there is political willingness. In particular, professionals have stated that barriers like resource constraints could be tackled and optimized if there is political willingness.

Mehra (1991) has discussed the politics of urban renewal in detail with the example of Shahjahanabad. He believes that the problems of built environment, particularly the problems of urban renewal/redevelopment can be solved in political process and shows how such issues are politicized, influenced by local politics and eventually affected or materialized as a political agenda. Mehra (1991) mentions from Pahl (1965) that built environment is the result of conflicts between those with different degrees of power in society; landowners, planners, developers, realtors, local authorities etc. and politics is the process by which this conflicts are carried on.

With details and examples from the long urban renewal scheme of Shahjahanabad, Mehra (1991) identifies at least three fields where politics play an important role; they include distribution of authority, dispersal of benefits and consolidation and protection of interests. Distribution of authority can be viewed in the vertical linkage, on one hand such as from the lower tier of local government to the apex of national government, and horizontal linkage, on other hand such as amongst different agencies. Here access to power politics by the local population and the local elites is similarly important as it is the autonomy and power of local bodies. In tug of war amongst different concerned authorities, whether it is service provider or responsible for planning, the question of authority subordination simply affects the welfare of the common people, for whom it is intended to, in the long run and nothing else. Secondly, politics is also an important factor for deciding who gets what and on the other way dispersal of benefits itself is an aspect of politics. Thus, distribution of benefits drained by the local elites and received by the underprivileged group is a matter of political consideration. The third field, consolidation and protection of interests, is implied in both levels of individual and collective action. While consolidation of interest is mostly perceived and practiced in the individual scale, such as a resident making some unauthorized modification to his house, protection of interest is widely practiced by interest groups. Groups with interest, such as organized business communities, unauthorized builders etc. tend to, and very often succeed to, influence decisions to protect their interest. This becomes a big hurdle in the way of development for the inner city.

To be more specific, cities where elections are important in politics, such politics of urban renewal/redevelopment is vital in order to maintain a safe constituency or to nurse a risky constituency or to maintain a vote bank; and for this purpose politicians

resist any disturbance to the status quo. His findings are valid not only in the south Asian context but also in most of the Southern cities.

6.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter discusses the possible ways of improving the blight situation in the context of old Dhaka. For that, similar experiences in the regional context as well as suggestion by the local experts and inhabitants are considered and assessed for applicability.

Actions for improvement of the blight situation are discussed according to the actors. It appears that the individual and neighborhood scale actors alone share limited scope for improvement in a few fields such as urban services, economic strengthening, business environment etc. Again, these actors can play significant role improving the built environment, cultural heritage, social environment etc. provided that they get required support from the city and national level actors. It also appears that the city and national level actors share the responsibility, as well that ability also, to intervene in the fields of urban governance that includes policy, planning, implementation and maintenance of utility and amenities, development control of built environment, conservation of built and cultural heritage etc. For economic empowerment and strengthen of the inner city people, national and city scale actors can play the role of facilitator to enable a thriving environment. External actors seem to take the role of observer only, and they might be able to take more share of the responsibly to address inner city urban blight. Although in this case initiatives are to be taken by the city or national level actors to get involved in the field.

This chapter also attempts to have some deeper understanding of the barriers that hinder urban renewal schemes to varying extent. Several problem fields are identified. For example, conflict of interest in varying degree among different actors, how urban renewal is perceived by the actors, felt priority of this problem and urgency to take initiative, land related complexities, attempts for piecemeal solution for the inner city without considering the wider city frame and lack of political willingness from almost all the actors in varying direction and extent.

7 Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendation

This research aims at improving the living condition of the traditional city center in the megacity of Dhaka, which is considered as a blighted area in the planning documents and also perceived as well as recognized as blighted largely in the professional and academic field. To do that, it has taken the course of investigating a number of issues. Such as, understanding the urban blight features in Dhaka, driving forces that foster urban blight to set in neighborhoods, relevant examples of urban renewal in South and South-East Asian cities, hurdles that check improvement of blight situation, role of different actors in different perspectives such as fostering, addressing and fighting urban blight as well as their role, capacity and willingness in improving the situation etc. This chapter summarizes all these issues and attempts to seek answer for the urban blight scenario of Dhaka and the role of different actors to address urban blight and improve the living condition for the inhabitants considering the hurdles in the prevailing condition.

Although the research focuses on the inner city of Dhaka and a very detail investigation of the neighborhood named Shankhari Bazar, a small street in old Dhaka, but it also considers the wider regional scale. Hence the study also includes similar conditions in a few historical cities of the South Asian countries, for example the walled city of Shahjahanabad in Delhi, the Walled city of Lahore, inner city of Karachi, Bhaktapur in Kathmandu valley etc. Consequently, the results of this study are also relevant for the regional scale to varying extent if not exactly.

7.1 Manifestation of urban blight in Dhaka

Reviewing the features of urban blight situation in different examples, it is observed that in the conventional case of industrialized societies a blighted neighborhood is primarily associated with three broad categories of attributes. These include severe unemployment and poverty, poor quality of physical and built environment and social exclusion.

Now, if the case of Shankhari Bazar in particular and the old Dhaka in a wider scale is considered, the main attributes of blight can be found to varying extent. Unemployment is not a big issue here. Instead, the old Dhaka, which is very often considered as the money spinner of the city, is the main center of manufacturing and production of small to medium scale industries as well as informal sector and varieties of service sector. Besides, this is the area where the rural migrants are first absorbed in the labor market. Underemployment is there but not unemployment, on the contrary it is the power house of the city for income and employment generation. Obviously, poverty exists in the area, but it is not specifically pertinent to the inner city that leads

to blight. Poverty is widespread through the city in different pockets and in the folds of urban fabric. Clearly unemployment and poverty in the inner city of Dhaka cannot be regarded as substantial character of inner city blight.

Similarly, there is no evidence of social exclusion of the inner city in the wider society. Some social perception about the inner city dwellers exist in the wider framework, for example the people living there are poor, not so sophisticated, less educated etc., but in no way they are socially excluded or discriminated. On the contrary, the inner city dwellers are proud of their social cohesion and show sympathy to the residents in the other areas for their lackings in this regard, this observation is widely accepted as a key feature of the inner city social life.

Thus, the only key attribute that contributes to blight situation in the inner city includes poor quality of physical and built environment. Again, much of which is pertinent to poor quality and inadequate urban services and mismanagement. Thus, it appears that urban blight in the inner city of Dhaka, particularly in Shankhari Bazar, manifests itself primarily in quality of built and physical environment as well as urban services.

7.2 Role of different actors in addressing urban blight

The role of different actors in addressing urban blight and improving the situation is discussed elaborately in earlier chapters. What appears that different group of actors have their own perception of the problem and, in most cases, own preconceived ideas about the problem and the ways to address the problem.

On the individual scale, residents appear to be aware of the situation, however most of them are not dissatisfied with the situation and consider it part of their life. They are willing to support interventions that will bring benefit to them quickly, and only if it is organized by public agencies or externally. They are not interested to take initiative and take responsibility on their own. Their interests are almost entirely tied to the parcel of land they are associated with. Residents are likely to oppose any intervention for urban renewal that might require them to cease profit or rent maximization from the parcel of land. Considering the neighborhood scale, the scenario is not different. In particular, for the case of Shankhari Bazar, both the residents and the CBOs showed a common tendency to utilize the ethnic identity as an element of blame game as well as an excuse to justify their inertia.

On the scale of city and national level actors, the scenario is not much optimistic. A number of agencies are involved in the arena with overlapping responsibilities and jurisdiction without a clear framework of accountability and coordination. Yet, in a simplified way, the present context endows the responsibility of planning coordination and implementation with the spatial planning authority of the city; that is the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK). It is an interesting observation that RAJUK is aware of

the blight situation as well as its responsibility and does not deny their dormancy. It simply tries to show excuses and justify their inertia; although, RAJUK is quite active in some programs like expansion of the city and production of new housing areas. For other relevant agencies, it was quite clear that urban renewal is not considered as important that requires immediate action on national or city scale. In addition, inner city urban renewal has always been an element of political game that significantly influences the entire scenario.

For the external actors, except for international organizations and NGOs, the issue is limited to academic interest primarily. The international organizations have the scope of intervention, but unfortunately, they do not have this in their agenda, again because it is not considered an urgent need. It's almost the same for the NGOs, they are not involved in the area though they have the capacity to make meaningful improvement, except only a few. These few organizations are more inclined towards building conservation instead of the living condition.

Therefore, two simplified observations can be inferred. Firstly, different group of stakeholders have different interest in urban renewal as well as blight and they seek for their respective benefit. And secondly, urban renewal is not perceived or considered so urgent that requires immediate and inclusive action on international, national, city or even sometimes individual scale as there are more serious issues that seek attention.

7.2.1 What has been done

Reviewing all the interviews, relevant literatures and observation on the field, it cannot be said that much has been done to improve the situation. As identified, the main attribute of blight in the inner city includes inadequate and poor quality of urban services and built environment. In this particular field there has been little visible development in last two decades. It is also unfortunate to observe that there is lack of comprehensive and feasible plan by the concerned agencies to improve the physical environment, urban services and built environment.

In precise, for the built environment, the efforts are limited to occasional declaration of various issues on public interest, such as identifying vulnerable structures, which have been implemented rarely. In the field of conserving the architectural heritage of the city, some particular conservation work has been positively implemented and a number of structures and areas are declared as protected, Shankhari Bazar is such an area. However, this protection on built structures have, on the contrary, exacerbated the living quality on the area considerably. On the sector of social development, it can be said that since independence, in 1971, there has been considerable improvement in the education and health sector, but other aspects such as cultural, recreational etc. has been deteriorated. For the economic promotion, no specific action has been taken

particularly for the businesses in Shankhari Bazar. For the inner city, business has been expanded on one hand with supportive actions. On the other hand, informal business has been multiplied rigorously due to the loopholes of formal action and policies. This increase in business have resulted in congestion and degradation of the living quality of the area. Noxious business has also mushroomed and posed sever risk to the inner city dwellers and though some tragic incidents have taken place, no real actions are taken.

In the wider city framework, the only considerable action is preparation of DAP, though the preparation procedure and quality of suggestions in DAP are questioned to a great extent. DAP has not been implemented by the time limit of 2015. The target population of this research remain outside the scope of urban poverty alleviation, slum upgrading or similar programs taken by different agencies. In the national framework, the main consideration for rural-urban migration is not directly addressed, but there are policies for rural development, poverty alleviation etc. which have not been proven to stop the influx of migrants to the urbanized areas, particularly Dhaka.

7.2.2 Why the situation has not been improved

Different group of stakeholders have different opinion on this issue. According to the inner city residents and CBOs, it is all about corruption and lack of willingness form the public sector. It clearly understood that urban renewal or, even, any sort of development program to improve the living quality of the city is considered as sole public responsibility by these actors. In particular, for areas where ethnic minorities are concentrated, such as Tanti Bazar, Gopibagh etc. beside Shankhari Bazar, residents indicate to the ethnic identity as one of the major causes. Although in countries like Bangladesh, perhaps, other alternatives are difficult; yet this perception of the citizen nourishes their inertia, tendency of nonparticipation and complaining. For the city/national scale actors it is not much different from complaining and providing excuses. The agencies that are responsible for relevant development works, it is all about lack of resources and complexity of the overpopulated city. Only a few of them indicate to corruption and lack of willingness. External actors have a much clear position in this regard, it is not in their priority list and the lack of good governance and corruption in the country make everything difficult.

In this blame game, what appears that lack of interest as well as perceived urgency, for all the actors, play as the main driving force that foster inertial to take actions concerning renewal.

7.3 Considerations for urban renewal

Obstacles that impede the way of renewal has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. These barriers are difficult to overcome in the present situation as a number of the barriers are deeply rooted in the way people behave and in their mental setting. It can be said that some of the problems are actually cultural and have been practiced for generations. It is not so easy to change the attitudes of people and the way a society perceives, practices and nourishes its values and norms. Thus, after reviewing all the possible hurdles for renewal, at least three key issues can be identified that must be considered for any sort of scheme that targets to improve the living condition in the inner city.

Lack of political willingness is, most possibly, the main factor that has the ability, and in fact does so, to set inertia to address urban blight and hinder any programs that has been initiated. Lack of political willingness is not only from the side of the public sector agencies, it's also a major concern from the side of the residents. It is quite clear that the residents are not really willing to participate in renewal programs, nor to take initiative by themselves. Even it also appears that they are not willing to accept any intervention irrespective of its implication on their quality of living. Political willingness alone can overcome many of the obstacles, if not, at least it can minimize adverse effects and initiate arrangements to settle difficult hurdles like conflict of interests, corruption, lack of public participation even lack of resources. Overcoming this unwillingness is actually a socio-cultural problem to overcome, which requires enlightening of the society that must come from within the society itself. Obviously, such changes cannot be done overnight, however, perhaps, it is also not possible to impose something to get cultural change in a society.

The next hurdle is the current problems associated with property rights and people's attitude towards property. Beside political willingness, change of attitude is also crucial to overcome this barrier. This requires radical cultural change in the political, administrative and social framework of Bangladesh. Again, to be specific about the problems with the vested properties issue, it is extremely difficult to overcome. Even the detail investigation led by Prof. Barkat in 2000 acknowledged this. Example of similar situation include some European countries' program of restitution and compensation of Jewish properties that were abusively taken over by the state during the Nazi regime to the rightful owners. Such programs are taken in countries, such as Germany, Poland and Hungary, as to implement the European Court of Human Rights judgements on restitution of properties (König, 2011; Kuchenbeker, 2011; Czepek, 2011). However, such direct restitution program is possibly not possible to implement in the Bangladesh context. Suggestions by Barkat and Zaman (2000) are based on

empirical study and more down to earth instead of being direct restitution of properties to the rightful heirs like the European examples.

Perception of the attributes of urban blight and ways to address it as well as perceived priority of renewal also pose obstacles for renewal. It is observed that some perceptions prevail in the professional, academic and other relevant fields that are significant in the decision making arena; for example, urban blight is perceived as synonymous to poor quality of physical features that are visible, urban renewal programs are considered and limited to conservation and slum upgrading, urban blight is considered as a less important issue that does not require immediate action etc. Considering different perspectives of all the actors, it also becomes clear that structural change in the institutional framework as well as cultural change and enlightening of thinking are required to overcome the prevailing perceptions.

Beside these three issues, lack of resources is a classic drawback particularly for the Southern cities like Dhaka. However, initiatives are more important to mobilize resources and manage efficient use of available resources. This again is linked it to the aspect of willingness.

Therefore, to provide recommendations that are possible to implement, it is assumed that the prevailing condition would not change radically. It implicates that different actor groups would be half willing and not very much enthusiastic about urban renewal programs, land and property related complexity particularly with the vested property issue would remain unsolved, priority of urban renewal would keep a low profile in the wider framework of decision making arena while the decision makers may not perceive urban renewal as a tool to improve the quality of inner city urban life, and perceptibly resources available for urban renewal would not be adequate.

7.4 What to improve

When the question arises what to improve in the inner city area, it also raises the question who will take the responsibility to improve the situation. This is not a one sided game. Taking the examples in different urban areas in the south Asian region and other areas in the world, it is suggested for the case of Dhaka the renewal should be viewed as public sector responsibility. Nevertheless, that must not leave the residents and other concerned agencies out of the scenario and consider them inactive participant only to bear the externalities. Instead, the role of the public sector has to be more as facilitator and less as provider while the receivers, that includes the range of residents and concerned other organizations, should be considered as active participants in the process of addressing urban blight. Here the public sector has to initiate the schemes and enable the process where participants can actively decide on the arrangements felt necessary and take actions accordingly. In some aspects, the public sector has to take

the role of provider, such as water and sanitation, basic education and healthcare, training on various schemes, promotion and protection of elements of cultural and historical interests, research on relevant topics, support to pollution control etc. In all cases of renewal schemes, regulatory activities should be controlled by the public sector.

As discussed in detail in preceding chapters, there is little scope of drastic intervention that would change the existing scenario radically. For example, solving the property right problem or restoring all the old structures in the area or relocating commercial uses from old Dhaka. On the contrary, taking small actions that would be possible considering the prevailing situation and would leave tangible and meaningful improvement, whatsoever small it might be, are perhaps more effective to address the inner city distress. For instance, it is extremely difficult to make open space in Shankhari Bazar, although everybody would agree that it is an utmost need; however regular cleaning of the road and proper waste management would largely improve the living environment of the area.

As it is observed, actions can be taken in categories that contribute to urban blight. Thus, interventions can be categorized in four groups. The most prominent attributes of urban blight in old Dhaka that requires intervention includes-

- Urban services and physical environment,
- Built environment,
- Economic promotion and
- Social development.

7.4.3 Urban services and physical environment

Scarcity of urban services is a city wide feature and not exclusive to the old Dhaka, just only the scarcity is in acute form there. Thus, the situation has to be improved following a scale of priority. According to the inhabitants of old Dhaka, the most urgent requirement is adequate supply of water. Next comes the improvement and adequate security of existing connections of electricity and gas supply in addition to more new connections. It is to be mentioned here that new connections of electricity and gas supply are not being approved for last few years continuously in the city. Proper cleaning of the neighborhoods, lack of street light and in some case community policing are also mentioned by the inhabitants.

Congestion is the single field that all the actors agree to be the most critical problem of old Dhaka as well as the entire city of Dhaka. De-densification and relocation of certain land uses are extremely difficult to implement in this area, in fact there is no evidence of successful example of such scheme in the Indian subcontinent so far. Thus, again,

actions need to be taken on a priority basis and in an incremental way instead of suggestion of mass scale relocation. Noxious industrial uses have to be identified, prioritized and relocated; other industrial and commercial uses can stay. The idea of making the old Dhaka a residential quarter only must be obliterated from the conceptualization of renewal scheme. On wider framework, limiting the surge of rural migrants need to be controlled.

Traffic congestion in Dhaka is one of the heaviest in the world. Without improvement of mass transport system, it has not been possible to improve the traffic situation in any city of such magnitude like Dhaka. The idea of increasing the amount of road area, which is again extremely difficult in Dhaka, and providing flyovers, which is nothing but a piecemeal solution, need to be reviewed and instead limiting the numbers of private vehicles and encouraging cycling should be considered. However, in the existing situation it is possible to manage traffic congestion significantly with proper traffic management and enforcement of existing regulations; until the long dreamt mass rapid transit (MRT) for Dhaka, which would be a metro rail system, is in operation.

Environmental pollution in old Dhaka is entirely contributed by the industries in the area. Relocation of noxious industries would lead to considerable improvement of the situation. Proper monitoring, enforcement of regulations and incentives to the entrepreneurs to reduce pollution would be helpful. Introducing concepts that minimizes waste such as industrial ecology, zero waste industries etc. and doing research on best practice and subsequent implementation etc. by the concerned agencies are significant in this regard.

7.4.4 Built environment

Poor quality of housing contributes significantly to the poor quality of living in the distressed areas of old Dhaka. Reviewing the inner city context in the regional framework, what appears that large scale conservation is not a must in old Dhaka. Particularly the current practice of protecting structures of historical significance, which endows all the negative externalities to the owner and holds no responsibility to maintain the structures, is itself a matter of question. This is not to say that there is no need for conservation. Conservation has to be conceptualized as a part of wider renewal scheme, not as the main driving force as it is currently perceived. It is a delicate task to determine structures that worth conservation and run the procedure of conservation and restoration, this task has to be perused as public responsibility. Changes in the building regulations are required that would compensate and help the owners of the protected buildings. Transferable development right (TDR) and prioritizing affected owner in public housing or land development schemes can be considered in this regard. Regulations are also required to merge plots for new

constructions up to a certain ceiling to ensure certain standards of living environment. To improve the housing stocks financial scheme such as easy loan, group loan etc. can be organized. Perhaps the most difficult task in this regard would be solving the property right problem, although this would be the most effective to improve the situation.

7.4.5 Economic promotion

Shankhari Bazar and adjacent areas are famous for their craft business. Other areas in old Dhaka houses mainly crafts and various types of small scale manufacturing business. Thus, to strengthen the economic base of the residents these businesses need to be supported. Easy access to financial support and training programs to improve the skill and efficiency of workers' and the production process also can considerably help the entrepreneurs. Perhaps what is more important here is promotion of the products. Particularly the craftworks need enough support to revive their lost glory and special nourishment to compete in the market. Beside training and financial help, marketing and promotion of products is equally important. Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MoCA) can play a role here to promote the products, such as crafts of metal, cork, conch shell, clay, leaf, toys, kites etc., as symbol of our traditional cultural and heritage in home and abroad. This will help the entrepreneurs to run and expand their business. Moreover, policies that influence such business, such as policies that determine rate of levy on import of raw materials, tax rebate or ceiling on the local market, protection of local products and duty imposed of imported items etc., should be formulated with care so that they foster such business. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) and Bangladesh Industrial and Technical Assistance Center (BITAC) can take the leading role in this regard.

7.4.6 Social development

Old Dhaka people are not socially segregated or excluded at all. Their social bonding and cohesion are well recognized and widely accepted as role model for the rest of the city dwellers. Residents consider that since independence there has been considerable improvement in the aspects of education, women empowerment, health care, child labor, child mortality etc. Yet, as mentioned by the residents, there are fields that have deteriorated and needs attention. This mainly include drug addiction and abuse, moral degradation, community feelings, lack of belongingness to the neighborhood and community etc. To improve these aspects, the residents and the CBOs have to take the leading role. Supports from the public sector can be considered as reinforcement. Social infrastructures that are required include more schools, healthcare facilities, schooling programs for adults and unprivileged children such as night schools, more options for recreational facilities like community libraries, clubs, playgrounds etc. The local

government can handle much of such facilities if simply they improve the quality of their services and rescue the encroached facilities. Simple enhancement of the services that are provided and, in some cases, just retrieving the facilities, for example open spaces, from illegal occupation will leave much impact to improve the quality of living in the overcrowded old Dhaka.

7.5 Scope of further research

There has been a number of issues raised in this research that required deeper insight but was not possible to investigate with adequate depth due to limitation of time frame and the scope of work limited to the intended research questions only. Nevertheless, it is observed that such questions provide in-depth view of the problems as well as ways to solve them. There is wide scope for further investigation on, at least, four topics that surfaced several times during this study.

The first issue is about the heritage conservation aspect. This issue has been raised several times and with different perspectives depending on who raise the question. For the individuals, it is mostly against conservation. For the advocacy groups, which includes activists, professionals and scholars, there are different opinions, most of the actors are inclined to conservation and restoration of old buildings while only a very few of them have raised the question of relevance and necessity of mass scale conservation. It requires a deeper insight to understand the necessity and impact of large scale heritage conservation in a situation like old Dhaka. It is observed in this study that the heritage structures in old Dhaka cannot compete with many other similar inner cities in terms of the architectural and cultural significance, there is lack of resources and initiatives to continue proper conservation and maintenance, the prevailing mode and the perception of conservation incur nothing but distress for the owners, residents and others associated with the built structures and lastly the people do not welcome conservation. It is to identify if conservation is solely dedicated for the sake of the built structures only or people are to be the prime concern considering the buildings are for the benefit of the people. Thus, in such a situation conservation of heritage buildings requires a deep investigation to delineate its attributes such as necessity, extent, scope, demarcation, ownership, mode of operation etc.

Secondly, the issues of political willingness and politics of renewal or similar program for the inner city demand attention. Thoughts in line of political economy consider the lack of willingness in the public sector specifically as a legacy of colonialism and the practice is perceived as an element of neocolonialism in a wider framework that is linked with the regional-global geopolitics. Simultaneously, the inertia of the people and the duality in their behavior, such as throwing all the responsibility to the public sector but being suspicious about the motive of the public sector, considering nonpublic sector for

better performance but again being suspicious about their motive and trusting public sector in that case etc. are considered to be rooted in the historical and cultural context of prolonged colonialism and political bias. A research on the political perspective of urban redevelopment has been covered the city of old Delhi and it shows a lot of similarities with old Dhaka. Thus, the old Dhaka case demands further research to clearly identify the role of politics and the political willingness for urban renewal program.

The third issue that has been raised repeatedly in this study is about the ethnic identity and incurring distress. Shankhari Bazar and adjacent area is solely Hindu populated and in some other areas in old Dhaka this ethnic minority group constitutes majority of the local population. This group of people complaint that not only them but also their area is subjected to discrimination and distress due to their ethnic identity. This complaint is supported by some scholars and activists, however there is lack of documented evidence to support such complaint and the concerned authorities have denied anything like this. This particular issue requires careful consideration. Communal unrest and repression are not new in this subcontinent and this is a historical fact along with example communal harmony. In Bangladesh, repression against Hindu community has been documented as sporadic events, however this complaint is rarely admitted by others outside this particular community. Therefore, this particular complaint is worthy of in-depth investigation. There have been a few studies on the impact and distress of the Hindu community due to the regulations concerning the vested property. Similarly, it could be an interesting topic of academic interest if urban distress is related to the ethnic identity of the residents of old Dhaka, as some studies in India points that there could be a connection.

Lastly, the property right disputes require deeper insight. There are several varieties of the property right complexities, probably the vested property issue is the most complicated one. Initiatives for conflict resolution require a strong political attitude in the first place. Detail and elaborate studies are required to find solutions and ideas of conflict resolution for the property right disputes.

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Appendix A

List of interviewees

A. Inside actors

1. **Individual scale actors** that are listed below includes all the informants that were consulted for this research. This consultation includes detail interviews, short dialogues, group discussion and workshop. Some of the interviewees were interviewed multiple times, however they are listed as single interviewee in the following list. List of interviewees according to the type of interaction (i.e. detail, short, group discussion, workshop etc.) is provided in chapter 2.

	Gender	No.	Occupation/business/employment type	Age group (approx.)
Residents of Shankhari Bazar	Male	25	Service holder, self-employed, retired, student, unemployed etc.	15 to 80
	Female	13	Home maker, student, retired etc.	25 to 55
Entrepreneurs	Male	28	Conch shell, metal product, stone product, restaurant, <i>baniyati</i> etc.	25 to 55
Artisans	Male	12	Conch shell, clay idol, accessories, cork crafting etc.	15 to 45
Residents of other inner city areas	Male	6	Service holder, doctor, business, self-employed, retired etc.	25 to 70
	Female	3	Service holder, home maker, student.	20 to 50
	Total	87		

2. **Neighborhood scale actors** that were consulted (as mentioned above) are listed below.

	Gender	No.	Name of the CBO	Age group (approx.)
Members of CBOs Shankhari Bazar	Male	4	Shankhari Bazar Nagotik Committee	50 to 65
		1	Sanghamitra Puja Committee	55
		1	Pratidwandi Club	50
	Total	6		

B. Outside actors

1. **City/national scale actors** are listed as intuitions and the interviewees in the institutions are listed as the position/designation. These interviews were formal in nature and also some interviewees were interviewed more than once, but listed as single interviewee.

Name of the Institution	Designation/position
Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (RAJUK)	Director, Town Planning Director, Plan Preparation Director, Development Control Project Director, DAP
Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC)	Chief Town Planner, Urban Planning Department
Urban Development Directorate (UDD)	Director Deputy Director Senior Planner
Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)	Chairman Director, Marketing and Design Designer, Design center
SME Foundation	Managing Director
Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning (MoP)	Joint Head, Programing Division
Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Additional Secretary
Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)	Officer in Charge, Police station, Shankhari Bazar
Department of Archeology (DoA), Ministry of Cultural Affairs	Archeologist
Dhaka University (DU)	Professor, Department of Economics Professor, Department of Geography Professor, Department of History Professor, Department of Sociology
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)	Professor, Department of Architecture Professor, Department of Architecture Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Jahangirnagar University (JU)	Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
North South University (NSU)	Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Management
The Daily Janakantha	Executive Editor
Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI)	Director, Chamber Group
Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association (BEIOA)	Chairperson
Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB)	President, Executive Council

2. **External actors** are listed as intuitions and the interviewees in the institutions are listed as the position/designation. These interviews were formal in nature and also some interviewees were interviewed more than once, but listed as single interviewee.

Name of the institution	Designation/position/occupation
Babgladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)	General Secretary
Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)	Member, Executive Council
Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	Executive Director Research Director
Urban Study Group (USG)	Chief Deputy Chief
Center for Urban Studies (CUS)	Chairman Key Researcher and Honorary Treasure
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)	Executive Director
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh	Vice President General Secretary
Urban professionals and scholars	Urban planner Researcher
Urban activists	Architect, 2 Social worker, 1
Save The Children (Bangladesh)	Deputy Manager
UN Habitat, Bangladesh	Country Representative
UNIDO Bangladesh	Country Representative
USAID	Deputy Manager
GIZ, Bangladesh	Country Director Urban planner
Members of civil society	Retired judge Retired businessman Doctor Lawyer

Appendix B

Guideline questions for interviewees, inside actors

The inside actors constitute the local residents and community based organizations in Shankhari Bazar and adjacent area as well as some other inner city neighborhoods. These interviews were informal in nature and in most cases conducted as long discussions or narratives or part of group discussions or part of participant observation or go along. The role of guideline questions was mostly to keep track of the flow of narratives. The topics to be discussed and get information were more important than the questions asked. The prepared guideline questions are listed below. However, in many cases the questions were asked in a different manner, as it was prepared beforehand, just to go along with the flow of discussion or narratives.

1. Questions for the local residents

Discussion topics	Guideline questions
Historical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been living here? What kind of development have you seen/ heard/ felt about this area. What are the main differences? Can you describe it in different time line like British period/ Pakistan period/ after independence/ last decades? Do you like it? Why/ why not? • How have you been involved in this area? What are the fields of interest? Why/why not?
Social achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find the achievements since the past? How do you understand that? What are the factors? What has been degraded? How and why? • What is the composition of your family? No. of family members, level of education, education of girls, employment status, overseas travel, no. of dependent/ unemployed relatives, no. of maids/ servants, age of marriage, child marriage, child motherhood, social bonding, social hierarchy and moral values etc.
Built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find the built environment now and in the past? What problems are there? Why? Why it is not maintained? What to do with it? How? What could be the problems?

- What do you want about your old building? Are you satisfied with it? Why/why not? How do you find the living environment? Lighting, ventilation, dampness, adequacy of space, occupancy rate, level of privacy, quality and adequacy of utility services etc.
- How do you find newly constructed buildings as compared to the old ones? What improvements are there?
- What do you want if you construct a new building instead of your old one? No of stories, set back, living space quality, services, no. of housing units etc.
- How do you find the idea of plot merging? Will your neighbors agree? Why/why not? Will you agree? Why/why not? What problem/potential you see in plot merging?

Physical environment

- How do you find the physical environment in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? Are you satisfied? What problems/ good thing do you see? How do you feel about the crowd/ messiness/ mismanagement here?
- How do you find the general cleanliness in this area? Why it is like that? How do you manage the garbage disposal? Why does everyone/ anyone/you dispose garbage in the road/ lampposts/ rare courtyards/ inner courtyards? Why don't you/ anyone use the garbage disposal bins that are provided by DCC?
- Is the community involved in garbage disposal management? What do you do from your side? Is DCC properly? Do you pay for it? Are you able/ willing to pay more for better services?
- How do you find the crowded environment in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? How it can be managed? What do people do?

Social and cultural environment, social exclusion

- How do you find the cultural environment in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? What makes you proud? What keeps you united? Do you find any difference compared to new Dhaka? Do you find any change compared to the past?
- What are the main cultural programs? Who organize them? How does the community participate? Are there any conflicts? What about the conflict resolution?

- How do you find the social environment in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? What about the social bonding compared to new Dhaka? What makes you proud? What keeps you united? Do you find any change compared to the past?
- What is the strength of your community? How do you perceive it? Do you feel united/segregated? Why/ why not?
- Do you feel proud of you community/ area? Can you express/ contain this pride anywhere? Have you ever faced any discrimination for your community/ area? Do you ever feel yourself embarrassed/ ashamed/ degraded/ lower status/ inferior/ discriminated outside your community/ area/ old Dhaka?

Investment
decision,
economic
strengthening

- What are your main fields of expenditure? How do you manage the mismatch between income and expenditure?
- What are the fields of your investment? What is the priority? How do you decide the priority?
- What do you do to improve your economic activities/business? What facilities from the public/ private sectors do you get now? What more do you want? Are you willing/ able to pay tax/ fee/ charges for your business?

Extension/growth
of the area

- How do you perceive the growth of this area/your community? What about extension? Would you like to move to some other areas? Why/why not?
- On what condition would you like to move from here? If you move, would you like to move alone? Why/ why not? If you move, what do you want to do with the land here?
- What do you want as a community/personally from the public sector about the growth/extension of this area?

Foreign
involvement,
NGO
involvement

- How do you find the involvement of foreign origin about the development of this area? Do you trust them? Would you like to participate in development programs by them? Why/ why not?
- How do you find the involvement of NGOs in development programs? Would you like to allow

them in your area/community? Do you trust them? Would you like to participate in development programs by them? Why/why not?

Property right

- What sort of property right problems do you find in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ country? What are the key problems/ source of problems?
- How do you find the vested property issue? Are you aware of the legal issues? Are you affected? Is anyone of your family members/ relatives/ friends affected? What is the extent of its adverse effect?
- What is the proportion of vested property in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka? Can you identify them?
- How are people occupying/using the properties that are vested? What are they doing? What is the condition of such properties? Who maintains such properties? What about improving the living environment? Who is in charge?
- What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality? What can you do? What initiatives have you taken/want to take? What can be the trade off?
- What happens in buildings/ properties with many sharers? How have it evolved? How does it work? What about the investment decision on buildings? What is the proportion of such properties in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka/Dhaka?
- How do you find illegal encroachment or forced occupation of buildings in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka? How does it work? How are such buildings maintained?

Utility service

- What urban services are available in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka? Are they adequate? Who provide all the services? Are you satisfied with the services? Why/why not?
- What is the quality of available services? What about maintenance? Are your complaints cared? What about billing? Are you satisfied? Why/ why not? Are you willing/ able to pay more for better services?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main problems with services here? Can you prioritize the problems? How have you moved to improve the situation as community/personally? Is the community/CBOs involved in service management? How/why not? • How do you manage the services at building level? How do you manage the shared facilities like toilet/ water/ gas/ electricity? What about the time management? How the bill is shared by the users? Lump sum/according to use?
DAP, protected area declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware about the DAP suggestions about Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? Did you know in the preparation phase? Did you participate in the public hearings? • Are you aware about the declaration of protected area of Shankhari Bazar? How/ when did you come to know about it? Were you aware/ consulted in the preparation phase? How do you find the involvement of the academics and researchers in this regard? Have you found any initiatives by them? • How do you find the idea of protected buildings? What do you want? Why/ why not? What would be your proposal?
CBOs and community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find the CBOs in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? What are the prime involvement areas? Are you satisfied with them? Why/why not? What do you expect? • What is the level of acceptance/ influence of the CBOs in the community/ area? Do they protect the common interest of the community/ area? How do you get that? • How do you participate in CBO lead initiatives/programs or community development programs? Does other people/ neighborhood/ community take part? Why/why not? • What would be your suggestion to make the CBOs more involved/empowered in the development of the community/ area?

Demography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the population density in this area? What is the average family size? What is the average number of families living in each building? • What probable portion of the population of this area are voters? What portion of them are children? What is the probable ratio of male and female? • What is the probable portion of the residents are indigenous/ originally from this area? What portion of them are migrants from outside? Is the ratio changing? Does it make any problem or provide variety?
Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who migrate to this area? Why? How long do they stay? How do they interact with the local residents? How do the local residents feel about the in-migrants? • Do you want to migrate? Why/ why not/ where? • Who migrates from here? Why? Where do they go? Do they keep in touch with the community/ area? Do they come back? How do the local people feel about the out-migrants?
Property price, tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the price of property in this area/old Dhaka? What is the increase rate? Why? • What is the rental value here? How is it decided? Is it easy/difficult to rent a housing unit here? Is there any precondition? Why is the rental value so high with such poor housing quality?
Ethnic consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find the ethnic ground of this specific neighborhood? Is the ethnic purity a strength/ weakness? How do you feel about it? • What is the effect/ influence of ethnic value in your life/ in the life of this neighborhood? What additional value does it offer? • Do you feel uncomfortable outside this area? Why/why not? Do you ever faced/felt that this ethnic ground brings potential/problem for the area/ residents? Do you consider it as potential/ problem? Why?

- Is the ethnic purity important for you/ community/ area? Why/ why not? What do you do/do anything at all to maintain the purity?
- How do you find the ethnic label of this area? Is it a stigma/branding? Why?

Craft business

- How do you find the business environment in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka? Is the business thriving/ declining?
- How are you paid for your work? Are you satisfied with your income/ salary? Why/ why not? What do you expect? Why?
- What do you do to improve your economic activities/business? What facilities from the public/ private sectors do you get now? What more do you want? Are you willing/ able to pay tax/ fee/ charges for your business?
- How do you find the religious connotation of the craft business in Shankhari Bazar? Does it make any help/ hindrance for the business? What do you want?
- For conch shell crafts: Why is the product quality not improving? Why is the number of enterprises declining? Why are people changing their traditional family business? Will you bring your children to this profession? Why/ why not? What more support do you need/want for this craft business?

Renewal perspective and participation

- How do you perceive/ feel/ aspire for the development of Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka?
- What do you want to improve your living quality? What do you want about the buildings, services, business, health, education etc.?
- How to improve the situation? Whom do you find as the main actors? What can/ should they do? Whom do you trust? Why/ why not? What can be done to gain your trust? How?
- How do you find your role in this regard? Are you willing to take part in such programs? Are you willing to take responsibility? Do you believe in your capacity? Do you feel yourself responsible/ trustworthy?

- How do you find the role of your community in this regard? Are they willing to take part in such programs? Are they capable?
 - What are the requirements/ conditions/ incentives to improve participation of residents/ CBOs/ community to ensure/ enhance active participation in renewal programs? What kind of barriers do you see? How to overcome them? Are there any alternative suggestion?
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2. Questions for the local CBOs

For the community-based organizations, the same pattern of questions designed for the residents were asked. In addition to that, only a few more questions about their involvement were asked. They are as follows.

Guide line questions:

- What is the responsibility and capacity of the CBOs? What are the prime involvement areas? Why/why not?
- How do you find the achievements of the CBOs so far? What has been done in the past? What is being done at present?
- What is the level of acceptance/influence of the CBOs in the community/area? Do they protect the common interest of the community/area? How do you understand that?
- What is the extent of participation of the community in CBO lead programs? Are they supporting? Are there any problems/conflicts? How do you deal with such conflicts?
- What would be your suggestion to make the CBOs more involved/empowered in the development of the community/area?

Appendix C

Guideline questions for interviewees, outside actors

Interviews were conducted in both formal and informal way. There were some guideline questions for each group of interviewees. These guideline questions were designed to derive information and continue discussion with the informants. The questions are listed as follows according to the groups of actors.

1. City/national scale actors:

The first group of interviewees are city/national scale actors as listed below.

- A. Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (RAJUK)
- B. Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC)
- C. Urban Development Directorate (UDD)
- D. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)
- E. SME Foundation
- F. Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI)
- G. Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association (BEIOA)
- H. Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning (MoP)
- I. Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance (MoF)
- J. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)
- K. Department of Archeology (DoA), Ministry of Cultural Affairs
- L. Universities (Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Jahangirnagar University, North South University)
- M. The Daily Janakantha
- N. Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB)

A. Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, authority, capacity, urban development decision, integration, perspective on urban renewal, old Dhaka development, DAP process, implementation, alternative, environmental degradation, property right etc.

Guide line questions:

- What is the responsibility and capacity of RAJUK in terms of spatial planning?
- How does it integrate with other institutions?
- What are the general considerations for urban development? How is the need assessed?
- What are the priorities for urban development? How are the priorities decided?
- Is there any specific consideration about old Dhaka?
- What is your opinion about the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? What problems you see there? What potentials do you see there?
- What could be the role of DSCC in improving the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka?
- What are the considerations for DAP? Why the DAP suggests large scale redevelopment of old buildings in old Dhaka?
- How do you find the allegation against DAP that it supports some vested interest? What measures are taken in the preparation phase?
- How the DAP will be implemented by 2015? What will happen after 2015? Are there alternative suggestions?
- What is the role of RAJUK in development control? How is it managed? How does RAJUK act against illegal/inappropriate/incompatible development? What are the preventive measures? How are the measures updated?
- How do you find the allegation of supporting such development by some RAJUK members? What are the preventive measures and how are they adapted?
- How do you find public participation in DAP and other RAJUK programs? What can be improved and how? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- What is your perspective about the heritage value in old Dhaka?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?

- How do you see the future development of old Dhaka? What can be improved and how? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them? What is the role of RAJUK in this regard?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/Dhaka/Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka/country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

B. Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, authority, capacity, integration, involvement in DAP, improvement of neighborhood, environmental degradation, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- What is the responsibility and capacity of DCC in terms of spatial planning? How does it integrate with other institutions?
- What are the responsibilities of Urban Planning and Slum Upgrading departments?
- What are the general considerations for urban development? How are they decided? Is there any specific consideration about old Dhaka?
- What is your opinion about the DAP proposals for old Dhaka?
- What is your opinion about the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? What problems you see there? What potentials do you see there?
- What could be the role of DSCC in improving the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and adjacent area? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find public participation in DSCC programs? What can be improved and how? Are there alternative suggestions?

- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/Dhaka/Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka/country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

C. Urban Development Directorate (UDD)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, authority, capacity, integration, perspective on urban blight and renewal, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- What is the responsibility and capacity of MoHPW / UDD in terms of spatial planning? How does it integrate with other institutions?
- What are the general considerations for urban development?
- Is there any specific consideration about old Dhaka?
- What is your opinion about the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? What problems you see there? What potentials do you see there?
- What is your opinion about the DAP proposals for old Dhaka? What is the scope of UDD in this regard?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- What is the scope of UDD in addressing urban blight in other cities?

- What would be the suggestion in this regard? What are the alternatives?
- What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- What would be your suggestions in this regard for other cities of the country?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka/country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

D. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Ministry of Industry (MoI)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, authority, capacity, legal issues and management of small and cottage industries in Bangladesh, environmental degradation, industrial parks, training programs, marketing of products, economic potential and management of traditional crafts, traditional crafts and management of heritage value etc.

Guideline questions:

- What is the responsibility and capacity of the institution in terms of small and cottage industries in Bangladesh?
- How are the small and cottage industries identified/ categorized/ characterized? Are there any legal definition or written guideline/ policies? Do you find any other way better?
- What kind of supports do you offer to the small and cottage industries?
- How the industrial parks are managed? What are the selection criteria? Why some parks are not running well and what can be done to improve them?
- How the training programs are managed? How the crafts are selected? What is the feedback from the trainees?
- How do you support/ promote the traditional crafts/ cottage industries/ trainees' products? What problems do you face? What potentials you find? What is the scope of BSCIC to widen support for marketing?

- What do you think about the role of traditional crafts in relation with heritage value? How can they contribute? Can they at all? What problems do you see in this regard? What potentials you find? What is the scope of BSCIC in this regard?
- How do you find the craft industries in old Dhaka? How can BSCIC support them? Who are the other actors here are what are their roles?
- How do you find the crafts in Shankhari Bazar, in particular the conch shell crafts? What is the scope of BSCIC to support this conch shell crafts? What problems may arise? How to overcome them? What are the alternatives?
- How do you find the religious connotation of traditional businesses in Shankhari Bazar in the wider framework?
- How do you find the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? How do you think the situation can be improved?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/Dhaka/Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?

E. Small & Medium Enterprise (SME) Foundation, Ministry of Industry (MoI)

F. Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI)

G. Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association (BEIOA)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, authority, capacity, legal issues and management of small and cottage industries in Bangladesh, environmental degradation, industrial parks, training programs, marketing of products, economic potential and management of traditional crafts, traditional crafts and management of heritage value etc.

Guideline questions:

- What is the responsibility and capacity of the institution in terms of varying/ small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh?

- How are the varying/ small and medium enterprises identified/ categorized/ characterized? Are there any legal definition or written guideline/ policies? Do you find any other way better?
- What kind of supports do you offer to the small and medium enterprises? How programs are developed? How does the SMEs qualify/ apply/ take part in such programs?
- What are the major barriers you find in the SME sector? Who are the main actors? How can they improve the situation?
- What is your opinion about the informal industries in general in respect to the overall/ economic/ social development of the country?
- What is your opinion about formalization/taxation prospect for informal industries?
- What is your opinion about the informal industries in old Dhaka? What problems they create there? What potentials do you see with them? How they can be managed? How to improve their efficiency/ business/ product quality/ production process etc.?
- How do you find the relocation of the leather industries in Hazaribagh? Why is it not happening? How to make it happen?
- How do you find the light engineering industries in general and the cluster in old Dhaka in particular? What about their relocation?
- How do you find the light engineering industries in old Dhaka? What contributions they make? What potentials you see there? What problems you see there? What about the relocations? What will happen if the industries move?
- How do you find the noxious/ hazardous/ threatening industries/ warehouses in old Dhaka? What to do with them? Who are the main actors here and what are their role?
- How do you find the public demand of relocating the noxious/ hazardous/ threatening industries/ warehouses from old Dhaka after the Nimtali tragedy? Why is it not happening? Are they being supported/protected/promoted? Who are the main actors here and what are their roles?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/Dhaka/Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are

their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?

- How do you find the small-scale traditional crafts and businesses in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? What is the scope of SME Foundation/FBCCI/BEIOA to support them? Who are the other/main actors to support these industries? Who are the main actors here and what are their role?
- How can such industries be supported? What problems may arise? How to overcome them? What are the alternatives?
- How do you find the religious connotation of traditional businesses in Shankhari Bazar in the wider framework?
- How do you find the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? How do you think the situation can be improved?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?

H. Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning (MoP)

I. Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, procedure, priority of development and budget allocation, development partners involvement, urban blight situation and need to address,

Guideline questions:

- How does the commission/ERD prepare general/sectoral planning for the country? How are the different agencies coordinated? How are the demand perceived/decided/calculated? How are the plans approved/processed? How are they monitored/evaluated/assessed?
- How physical planning is coordinated with other sectoral planning? How all these are monitored/evaluated/assessed?
- What are the priorities for public investment in the countries? How these priorities are perceived/assessed?
- Why does urban blight/renewal appear to keep a low profile in public investment? What are the considerations in this regard?

- How do you find the role of development partners in the development scenario of Bangladesh? How are the fields of intervention decided? How the mutual interests assessed? How are the local interests protected?
- What are the main fields for development partners' involvement?
- Who are the pioneer partners in the field of urban development? What are the main subsectors? Why does urban blight/renewal show a low profile in this regard?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?

J. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, crime situation, communal unrest etc.

Guideline questions:

- What is your responsibility and scope of intervention in this area?
- How do you find the crime situation in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka in general?
- How do you find the social environment at present? Has it been improved from the past?
- How do you find the communal environment in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka in general? How do you find the allegation of communal unrest/discrimination/suppression in this/other area?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?

K. Department of Archeology (DoA), Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MoCA)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, wider perspective, improvement, etc.

Guideline questions:

- What is your responsibility and scope of action/intervention in the field of archaeological sector in Bangladesh?

- How are the archeological quality/status/merit decided? Are there any legal definition or written guideline/policies? Do you find any other way better?
- How do you find The Antiquities Act, 1968? What are the limitations/drawbacks? How can they be improved?
- How do you address anything (tangible and nontangible elements like object, building, area, craft, business, profession etc.) of heritage value that are not listed by DoA? What is your suggestion in this regard?
- How do you find the Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka in general in regard of heritage value? What is the extent of involvement of DoA in this regard?
- How do you address the issues of nonstop demolition of old buildings?
- How do you find the non-building elements of heritage value in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka in general?
- How do you find the role of heritage elements in improving the living environment in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? What about the other areas in the country? What is the role of DoA in this regard?
- What are the main factors that have caused degradation of the built environment in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka in general? How to improve the situation? What is the role of DoA in this regard?
- How do you find the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka in general? How do you think the situation can be improved?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?

L. Universities (Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Jahangirnagar University, North South University)

Discussion topics: Urban blight scenario, urban renewal, DAP, actors' involvement, environmental degradation, improvement of the blight situation, prospects and barriers, religious connotation and marginalization, social

exclusion, economic strengthening and potential, conservation, tourism, renewal perspective, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- Why and how urban blight takes place in Dhaka/old Dhaka/Shankhari Bazar? What are the driving forces? Is there any pattern in the regional perspective?
- Who are the main actors in the blight scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected?
- What is the role of the local residents in this blight scenario?
- How do you find the so far practiced urban renewal examples in the regional perspective? What are the lessons?
- What are the learnings that can be implemented in Dhaka/ Bangladesh? Why and how?
- What are the learnings that cannot/ should not be implemented in Dhaka/Bangladesh? What are the mismatches? How can they be improved?
- How do you find the economic condition/ segregation/ poverty/ unemployment in Dhaka/ old Dhaka/ Shankhari Bazar? How would you compare it in relation to the wider city of Dhaka? What are the reasons behind?
- How do you find the social acceptability/ inclusiveness/ exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka residents in the wider city/ national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- Who are the main actors in the renewal scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected?
- How do you find the role of city/national actors' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- Why does urban blight/renewal appear to keep a low profile in public investment? What are the considerations in this regard?
- How do you find the role of external actors' and development partners' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in

the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?

- How do you find the role of NGOs' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the role of the individual and neighborhood actors' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?
- How do you find the DAP proposal for old Dhaka? Does it protect the interest of the city and citizens in general? how do you find the implementation by 2015? What will happen after 2015? What to be improved in this regard and how? What are the alternatives?
- How do you find the religious connotation of Shankhri Bazar? Does it influence any decision in the upper level?
- How do you find the communal environment in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Bangladesh in general? How do you find the allegation of communal unrest/ discrimination/ suppression in this/other area?
- How do you find the role of conservation for urban renewal? How does it influence the life of the local residents? What happens in the regional scale? Is there any pattern? How do you find tourism lead conservation schemes?
- How do you find the role of tourism for urban renewal? How does it influence the life of the local residents? What can be done/ improved in this regard? How to keep the balance and support the local people?
- What is the role of academia in addressing urban blight?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?

- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

M. The Daily Janakantha

Discussion topics: Urban blight scenario, urban renewal, actors' involvement, environmental degradation, religious connotation and marginalization, social exclusion, improvement of the situation, DAP, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- Why and how urban blight takes place in Dhaka/old Dhaka/Shankhari Bazar? What are the driving forces?
- Who are the main actors in the renewal scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected?
- How do you find the communal environment in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Bangladesh in general? How do you find the allegation of communal unrest/discrimination/suppression in this/other area?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/Dhaka/Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?
- How do you find the DAP proposal for old Dhaka? Does it protect the interest of the city and citizens in general? how do you find the implementation by 2015? What will happen after 2015? What to be improved in this regard and how? What are the alternatives?
- What is the role of media in improving the urban blight situation?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka/country? What can be done in this regard?

What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

N. Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB)

Discussion topics: Responsibility, scope, authority, capacity, legal issues and management of buildings, planning and building regulations and amendments, DAP, management of heritage buildings, peoples' involvement and emotional attachment with buildings, ways of compensation, conservation and tourism lead development, urban blight and renewal perspective, religious connotation and marginalization, social exclusion, economic strengthening and potential, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- How do you find the urban blight situation in Dhaka/ old Dhaka/ Shankhari Bazar? What are the driving forces? Is there any pattern in the regional perspective?
- Who are the main actors in the blight scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected? What is the role of the local residents in this blight scenario?
- How do you find the so far practiced urban renewal examples in the regional perspective? What are the lessons?
- What are the learnings that can be implemented in Dhaka/ Bangladesh? Why and how?
- What are the learnings that cannot/should not be implemented in Dhaka/ Bangladesh? What are the mismatches? How can they be improved?
- How do you find the economic condition/ segregation/ poverty/ unemployment in Dhaka/old Dhaka/Shankhari Bazar? How would you compare it in relation to the wider city of Dhaka? What are the reasons behind?
- How do you find the social acceptability/inclusiveness/exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka residents in the wider city/national framework? What are the reasons behind?

- Who are the main actors in the renewal scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected?
- How do you find the role of city/national actors' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- Why does urban blight/ renewal appear to keep a low profile in public investment? What are the considerations in this regard?
- How do you find the role of external actors' and development partners' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the role of NGOs' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the role of the individual and neighborhood actors' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?
- How do you find the religious connotation of Shankhri Bazar? Does it influence any decision in the upper level?
- How do you find the communal environment in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Bangladesh in general? How do you find the allegation of communal unrest/discrimination/suppression in this/other area?
- How do you find the DAP proposal for old Dhaka? Does it protect the interest of the city and citizens in general? how do you find the implementation by 2015? What will happen after 2015? What to be improved in this regard and how? What are the alternatives?
- How do you find the role of conservation for urban renewal? How does it influence the life of the local residents? How do you find the

involvement of public sector agencies in this regard? What happens in the regional scale? Is there any pattern? How do you find tourism lead conservation schemes?

- How do you find the role of tourism for urban renewal? How does it influence the life of the local residents? What can be done/ improved in this regard? How to keep the balance and support the local people?
- How do you find the existing planning/ development control and building regulation? Are they appropriate for old Dhaka? Do they support conservation of old buildings? What can be improved? How? What are the alternatives?
- What is the role of IAB in addressing urban blight?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/Dhaka/country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

2. External actors

The second group of interviewees are the external actors as listed below.

A. Advocacy groups

- Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)
- Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
- Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
- Urban Study Group (USG)
- Center for Urban Studies (CUS)
- Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)
- Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (ASB)
- Urban professionals and scholars
- Urban activists

B. Development partners

- Save The Children (Bangladesh)
- UN Habitat, Bangladesh
- UNIDO Bangladesh

- USAID, Bangladesh
- GIZ, Bangladesh

C. Members of civil society

A. Advocacy groups (BAPA, BELA, CPD, USG, CUS, BCAS, ASB, urban professionals & scholars and urban activists)

Discussion topics: Urban blight scenario, urban renewal, actors' involvement, DAP, improvement of the situation, prospects and barriers, religious connotation and marginalization, social exclusion, economic strengthening and potential, conservation, tourism, renewal perspective, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- Why and how urban blight takes place in Dhaka/ old Dhaka/ Shankhari Bazar? What are the driving forces? Is there any pattern in the regional perspective?
- Who are the main actors in the blight scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected?
- What is the role of the local residents in this blight scenario?
- How do you find the so far practiced urban renewal examples in the regional perspective? What are the lessons?
- What are the learnings that can be implemented in Dhaka/ Bangladesh? Why and how?
- What are the learnings that cannot/ should not be implemented in Dhaka/Bangladesh? What are the mismatches? How can they be improved?
- How do you find the economic condition/ segregation/ poverty/ unemployment in Dhaka/ old Dhaka/ Shankhari Bazar? How would you compare it in relation to the wider city of Dhaka? What are the reasons behind?
- How do you find the social acceptability/ inclusiveness/ exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka residents in the wider city/ national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- Who are the main actors in the renewal scenario? What is their involvement? How are they connected?
- How do you find the role of city/ national actors' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing

condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?

- Why does urban blight/ renewal appear to keep a low profile in public investment? What are the considerations in this regard?
- How do you find the role of external actors' and development partners' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the role of NGOs' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the role of the individual and neighborhood actors' responsibility/ involvement/ capacity/ willingness for urban renewal in the prevailing condition? How to improve their involvement? What problems may arise? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the environmental situation in old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ Bangladesh? Who are the main actors here and what are their role/ involvement? How to improve the situation? What alternatives are there?
- How do you find the DAP proposal for old Dhaka? Does it protect the interest of the city and citizens in general? how do you find the implementation by 2015? What will happen after 2015? What to be improved in this regard and how? What are the alternatives?
- How do you find the religious connotation of Shankhri Bazar? Does it influence any decision in the upper level?
- How do you find the communal environment in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/ Bangladesh in general? How do you find the allegation of communal unrest/discrimination/suppression in this/other area?
- How do you find the role of conservation for urban renewal? How does it influence the life of the local residents? What happens in the regional scale? Is there any pattern? How do you find tourism lead conservation schemes?

- How do you find the role of tourism for urban renewal? How does it influence the life of the local residents? What can be done/ improved in this regard? How to keep the balance and support the local people?
- What is the role of your institution/research institution/ activists in addressing urban blight?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?

B. Development partners (Save The Children, UN Habitat, UNIDO, USAID, GIZ)

Discussion topics: Scope, operation, field of interest, priority etc.

Guideline questions:

- How do you find the development progress in the country?
- How do you find the sectoral development in the country? How do you cooperate with the government/public agencies?
- How do you involve/interact with the NGOs in support programs? How do you communicate/interact with the target population?
- How do you decide the sectors for your involvement? How do you decide the priority of fields? Are there any guidelines/policies? Do you find any sector(s) left out but demand attention?
- Why does urban development keep a low profile in the development partners' involvement?
- How do you find the inner city urban renewal as field of involvement? How do you find conservation and conservation lead tourism programs as well?

C. Members of civil society

Discussion topics: problems and prospects in old Dhaka, life style, social exclusion, religious connotation, improvement of the living condition, noxious industries, DAP, property right etc.

Guideline questions:

- How do you find the development of Dhaka in your experience? What positive things are achieved? What negative things are done?
- How do you find the life in Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka? What are the achievements/ degradation? Would you like to live there? Why/ why not?
- What problems do you find in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka?
- What potentials do you find in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka?
- How do you find the noxious/ hazardous/ threatening industries/ warehouses in old Dhaka? What to do with them? Who are the main actors here and what are their role?
- How do you find the DAP proposal for old Dhaka? Does it protect the interest of the city and citizens in general? how do you find the implementation by 2015? What will happen after 2015?
- How do you find the religious connotation of traditional businesses in Shankhari Bazar in the wider framework?
- How do you find the living condition in Shankhari Bazar and old Dhaka? How do you think the situation can be improved?
- How do you find the social acceptability/ inclusiveness/ exclusion of the Shankhari Bazar/ old Dhaka residents in the wider city/ national framework? What are the reasons behind?
- What would be your general suggestions to improve the situation in old Dhaka? What are the alternatives? What problems may arise to implement the suggestions? How to overcome them?
- How do you find the property right dispute situation in Shankhari Bazar/old Dhaka/ Dhaka/ country? What can be done in this regard? What are the barriers for resolution? How do you find the vested property issue? What should be done about the vested property? How to go for restitution after so many years? What can be done in present reality?